DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 475 752	EC 309 604

AUTHOR	Autin, Diana
TITLE	Project SPAN: The Statewide Parent Advocacy Network of New Jersey. Final Report.
SPONS AGENCY	Special Education Programs (ED/OSERS), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2002-09-30
NOTE	104p.; Prepared by the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network of New Jersey, Inc. (SPAN). Cover title varies.
CONTRACT	H029M970020
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Advocacy; Behavior Disorders; Community Programs; *Disabilities; Early Childhood Education; Elementary Secondary Education; Emotional Disturbances; *Outreach Programs; *Parent Education; *Parent Participation; Parent Rights; Special Health Problems; Staff Development; Technical Assistance
IDENTIFIERS	*New Jersey

ABSTRACT

This final report describes activities and accomplishments of a federally supported 5-year New Jersey project, the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN). Project SPAN provides information, training, technical assistance, leadership development and support to families of children with special emotional/behavioral or health needs and/or disabilities. The project's special commitment is to children with the greatest need due to disability, poverty, discrimination based on race, sex or language, or other special needs. Project SPAN provides telephone and in-person individual advocacy and technical assistance designed to help families resolve education problems with parent-to-parent support and parent and professional development on educational rights, advocacy, and collaboration skills. The organization develops information brochures, fact sheets, information packets, manuals and a quarterly newsletter. The paper reports that SPAN has met or exceeded its projections for objectives concerning: (1) training and presentations; (2) technical assistance; (3) collaborative activities; (4) publication and dissemination of written materials; (5) staff development; and (6) parent empowerment. Examples of specific achievement include community resource centers; collaborative staff development; the Community Education Project; the Multilingual Center Project; the Medical Student Education Project; and providing family perspectives to policymakers. Project evaluation has been positive. Attached materials include sample brochures, a sample newsletter, a conference agenda, and an annual report. (DB)

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ED 475 752

U.S. Department of Education
FINAL GRANT PERFORMANCE REPORT
Cover Sheet

1. PR/ Award No.: HO29M70020-98-99-00-01-02

2. Project Title: Project SPAN

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5. Performance Reporting Period:

June 1, 1997 – September 30, 2002*

6. Budget Period

June 1, 1997 – September 30, 2002*

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Signature: Debra Fernandez Date: January 10, 2003

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STATEWIDE PARENT ADVOCACY NETWORK, INC.
(SPAN)

II. Project Summary

Project SPAN provides information, training, technical assistance, leadership development and support to families seeking to secure appropriate educational and health services for their children with special emotional/behavioral or health needs and/or disabilities. Project SPAN seeks to bridge barriers to parent-professional collaboration; student academic and social growth; cooperation and understanding between general and special education parents, and bilingual and English-speaking parents; and effective education in urban and rural areas. Project SPAN's special commitment is to those children with the greatest need due to disability, poverty, discrimination based on race, sex or language, or other special needs. Project SPAN's multi-faceted program is carried out by a bilingual, multiracial staff of parents, several who have disabilities, who have children with and without disabilities. Project SPAN provides telephone and in-person individual advocacy and technical assistance to assist families to resolve education problems; parent-to-parent support; parent and professional development on educational rights and advocacy and collaboration skills; informational brochures, fact sheets, information packets, manuals and a quarterly newsletter, The Bridge; and research and administrative negotiation to address systemic barriers.

SPAN has met or exceeded projections for trainings and presentations; technical assistance; collaborative activities; publication and dissemination of written materials and our newsletter; staff development for our own staff and for teachers and other professionals; and ensuring that the voice of parents is included in policy decisions about children with disabilities.

III. Project Status

Objective 1: Trainings and Presentations and Meetings

Throughout the 5 years of the grant, from June 1, 1997 – September 30, 2002, SPAN has conducted over 1,500 trainings. These trainings have included 105 county-based Basic Rights (21 each year to fulfill grant requirements); an additional 300 conducted upon request, Transition to Preschool/Inclusive Preschool/Child Care and the ADA/504, and Transition to Adult Life, IDEA/State Code, IEP, Family Voices, LRE/Inclusion (introduction to inclusion; building an inclusive IEP, positive behavior supports in the inclusive classroom, and inclusion implementation), Parent-to-Parent Overview, Positive Behavior Supports/Discipline, Section 504, Parent-Professional Collaboration and SPAN Awareness, Helping Your Child Succeed in School (for parents of students at risk of inappropriate referral to special education) in urban districts; Conflict Resolution/Due Process, Parent Involvement and Parents Engaged in Public Policy/Systems Advocacy (two-part training), School Reform/Effective Schools, the Parents' Role in Monitoring, Enforcement and Corrective Action, Solution Circles & Social Problem-Solving, and MAPS/Path Processes. Multi-session workshop series include Parent Leadership Development Institute (8 sessions), Strengthening Families (12 sessions), Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families and Communities (14 sessions), APEX (4 sessions, for Latino families), the Right Question Project (2 sessions), Parents Engaged in Public Policy (2 sessions), Map to Inclusive Child Care (6-8 sessions), and Early Intervention Procedural Safeguards (2 sessions). See Objective 11 for Catholic Family and Community Services Multilingual Center workshops.

Key trainings of interest include "train the trainer" series for our comprehensive Map to Inclusive Child Care modules for early intervention personnel, as well as the entire workshop series for all child care centers in many Abbott districts; Child Care and the ADA/504 for several child care and after-school care conferences, including the School-Age Child Care Statewide Conference; presentations on "The Parents' Role in Monitoring, Enforcement & Compliance' at the national Alliance conference; presentations on "Building a Parent Movement for Effective Schools" at both the northeast regional and national Alliance conferences, "Building Inclusive Schools for All Children" at the New Jersey State PTA convention; workshops on multiple intelligences and learning styles and collaboration at several annual NJEA conventions (for a total of 300 teachers); training on New IDEA/New State Code for all 75+ teachers and supervisors of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired; trainings on procedural safeguards for early intervention mediators, impartial hearing panelists, service coordinators, and service providers; trainings on assistive technology and transition, at the statewide UCP Assistive Technology Conference; an all-day presentation on inclusion for the New Jersey Developmental Disabilities Council Partners in Policymaking participants, and workshops on inclusion for the Middlesex Educational Service Commission, a series on family-professional collaboration and cultural competence fro student teachers at Kean University (SPAN's co- executive director taught the summer course on Families in Special Education); presentations on Special Education and School Reform to 50 urban educators and parents at the Abbott Convocation, 10 parents and educators at Prevent Child Abuse's Parent Involvement Conference, and 45 parents and educators at the International Dyslexia Association-New Jersey Chapter's annual conference; a hands-on-training on Parents Engaged in Public Policy for 50 community-based child serving agencies in collaboration with the New Jersey Center for Non-Profits; three Parents Engaged in Public Policy workshop series for parents of children with special emotional needs through a collaboration with the New Jersey Parents' Caucus; and a conference for National African-American Parent Involvement Day in collaboration with the East Orange Public Schools, where all the workshops were conducted by SPAN staff.

In addition, SPAN has conducted intensive, comprehensive trainings (eight three-hour or six four-hour sessions) on parent and student rights, best practices, and school reform for well over 2,000 parents in New Jersey's 30 high –poverty Abbott districts. This comprehensive training includes 2 sessions of particular interest to parents of children with special needs, and brings together parents of children with and without disabilities to identify areas of common concern and develop strategies to improve schools for all children. Dozens of parent graduates are serving on School Management Teams, District Parent Advisory Councils (special education, bilingual, and Title I), working with other community-based organizations, and providing support, training, and technical assistance to other families. (Six of SPAN's full-time staff are also graduates of the Parent Leadership Development Institute).

SPAN has videotaped many of our trainings, including Section 504/Idea, Positive Behavioral Supports/Discipline, IEP, Inclusion, Conflict Resolution /Due Process (including a due process hearing roleplay!), and the SPAN Resource Parent Training series consisting of approximately 25 hours of comprehensive, intensive training on all educational issues, with a special emphasis on special education. The training video sets have been disseminated to our Community Resource Centers and regional satellite offices.

SPAN has also conducted intensive, comprehensive trainings (eight three-hour or six four-hour sessions) on parent and student rights, best practices, and school reform for 15 groups of parents in East Orange, for a total of approximately 600 parents trained. Six of these parents worked for SPAN as leadership interns, gaining intensive leadership experience, working with other community-based organizations, and providing support, training, and technical assistance to other families. SPAN also met with Superintendents in several other urban districts to bring the comprehensive training series to parents in those districts, and was awarded a parent involvement grant from the Jersey City Public Schools, enabling SPAN to conduct both the Parent Leadership Development Institute and the SPAN Resource Parent training series in Jersey City. SPAN was also awarded a four year Goals 2000 grant that provided the funding to conduct the comprehensive training in all 30 of the State's poorest urban Abbott districts.

SPAN conducted over 50 Parent-to-Parent orientations for over 400 support parents (six hour facilitations) who are now serving as parent mentors for other parents of children with disabilities, developmental delays, and special health or emotional needs. 220 matches have been made, for a total of 880 contacts (4 contacts per match).

SPAN also disseminated information to over 64,430 families and professionals at conferences of other organizations.

Objective 2. NJ Foster Parents Association

SPAN has continued to provide assistance to the NJ Foster Parents Association and individual foster families on education issues throughout the 5- year grant. SPAN provided information for foster families on medical care for children who are medically-fragile through our Family Voices project. SPAN developed a video training on Positive Behavior Supports for Children with Challenging Behaviors that has been disseminated statewide through the NJ Foster Parents Association. SPAN developed materials regarding surrogate parents and rights of foster parents, which was disseminated to foster parents, state DYFS workers, local and county education agencies, and early intervention programs, and provided information on developing individualized health plans for children with special health care needs in school. SPAN also worked with Regional Early Intervention Collaboratives to develop guidelines for early intervention service coordinators and service providers regarding issues affecting foster children in early intervention. Finally, SPAN has conducted trainings for comprehensive trainings for surrogate parents and foster parents in several districts throughout the state.

Objective 3. Annual Conference

SPAN has held a conference for each year of the grant. A significant number of urban districts (Newark, East Orange, Paterson, Passaic, Trenton, Elizabeth, Jersey City, and Vineland) and Head Start programs sponsored special education and Title I parents to attend and provided transportation. Approximately half of the total participants of the conferences were from urban districts. Each conference offered multiple strands: Special Education, Parents as Leaders, School Reform, Health, Early Childhood, Parent-to-Parent, Title I, Transition to Adult Life and School-to-Work. Workshops were offered in English and Spanish with translation available, as needed. The last year of the grant, the SPAN conference was held for 2 days, which significantly increased the attendance of professionals and parents, enabling teachers to earn CEU's. The conferences also represented opportunities for parents of children with and without disabilities to come together to learn about school reform and effective schools, positive behavioral supports and public policy, and other issues of joint concern. Over 1,650 parents and professionals have attended these conferences.

Objective 4. Technical Assistance

Telephone technical assistance through our hotline was provided by paid SPAN staff and trained SPAN Resource Parent volunteers to 143,503 families and professionals. SPAN staff and SPAN Resource Parents have also conducted 15,750 in-person contacts for information, technical assistance and support at IEP meetings, school or home visits, mediation or due process hearings, hospital visits, parent support groups, on-site technical assistance to support the inclusion of children with disabilities at child care centers, and IEP reviews through our Community Education Project, our Southern satellite office, our Community Resource Centers, the Multilingual Center, Special Child Health Services Family Resource Parents, Welfare and Human Rights Monitoring Project, Family Voices and our Inclusive Child Care project. Over 26,054 home visits have been conducted through our Parents As Teachers program to either urban families or rural migrant families. In addition, over 68,375 families have received information, technical assistance and support through SPAN's website and the websites of our Community Resource Centers. 12,795 families received assistance in response to e-mail requests.

Objective 5. Community Resource Centers

SPAN has maintained our existing Community Resource Centers covering the following counties: Atlantic, Bergen, Burlington, Camden, Cumberland, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Passaic, Sussex, and Union. Two new sites (both housed in community-based centers) provide additional support and a place where parents can meet with Resource Parents and take advantage of the numerous resources available (printed information and videos). Each site represents collaboration with a school district or community-based organizations and agencies including 3 school districts, 2 county ARCs, 3 Aspira offices, NJ Parent Advocacy, Training and Help, Center for Stronger Families, a Montessori school, Association for Special Children and Families, Catholic Family and Community Services, and Jewish Family Services. Each Resource Parent and Center has received a biweekly update from the SPAN office, including information about new legal developments, research on best practices for children with special needs, action alerts, information on upcoming conferences and workshops and resource materials.

Each year, SPAN has conducted 12 Resource Parent training series (of six sessions each) for at least 10-15 parents (and several professionals). Over 600 parents are now trained SRPs. SPAN Resource Parents assist parents with telephone and in-person technical assistance, sponsor and conduct trainings, and engage in other activities, including facilitating focus groups and public forums for district self-assessments, attending and speaking at School Board meetings, testifying before the State Board of Education, serving on PTAs, Special Education Parent Advisory Councils, School Management Teams, Title I Parent Advisory Councils, and disability and community agency Boards and committees.

Objective 6. Newsletter

During the 5 years of this project, SPAN has published and disseminated 18 issues of our newsletter, The Bridge, to our mailing list of over 10,000 parents and professionals. (The newsletter mailing list grew by over 20% during the grant period). Each issue of The Bridge features articles and updates (in English and Spanish) on SPAN projects and activities, education and health issues and development, and other relevant issues (such as welfare reform; tips for parents and professionals, developing an effective parent advocacy group; book reviews; recreation, etc.).The Bridge also features artwork created by kids with and without disabilities. SPAN also published a total of 32 issues of Family Voices newsletter for families of children with special health care needs (mailing list of over 1,600 families), and a total of 8 Parent-to-Parent newsletters in English and Spanish (mailing list of over 1,300 families). Eight issues of *Inclusion Insights* and two issues of *Transition News*, collaborations with the New Jersey State Department of Education written by SPAN staff, have been disseminated to SPAN's mailing list (10,000) as well as every school district and charter school in the state (mailing list of over 10,650).

Objective 7. Publications and Media Coverage

SPAN has updated the Basic Rights manual twice over the last 5 years. The first revision, completed in the 1999-2000 grant year, incorporated the federal IDEA regulations and corresponding state code changes. The Basic Rights manual was updated again in the 2000-2001grant year to incorporate additional state code changes. The manual, as well as 40 other SPAN publications, was also translated into Spanish. The Basic Rights manual and other SPAN materials are available on our website free of charge to families. Many new materials were developed over the last five years. New materials include "Building a Parent Movement for Effective Schools," "Building Inclusive Schools for All Children," Parent Procedural Safeguards under IDEA and the State Code," "Parents' Role in Monitoring, Enforcement and Corrective Action," "Guide to Family Involvement in Monitoring and Self-Assessment," "Social Problem-Solving," "MAPS and PATH Planning Processes," "and "Solution Circles," among others. In addition, the Parents Engaged in Education Reform (PEER) Project of the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health reprinted SPAN's information packet on effective school-wide discipline practices, and disseminated it to every Parent Training and Information Center.

Overall, the project has disseminated more than 10,000 Basic Rights manuals and approximately 1,300,000 fact sheets, information packets and other brochures, in response to requests for technical assistance and at meetings, trainings and conferences. SPAN materials have also been disseminated at state, regional and local conferences, including:

- ✓ New Jersey Education Association Annual Convention and "Good Ideas" Mini-Conferences
- ✓ Self-Help Clearinghouse conferences
- ✓ Family Support Awareness Day
- ✓ Buddy Walk (Parents of Exceptional Children & National Down Syndrome Society)
- ✓ County and local health and community fairs and disability awareness forums
- ✓ County Transition to Adult Life Consortia & Workforce Incentive Board Education Committees
- ✓ Title I Parent Coordinators' Statewide Conference
- ✓ Title I Region II Conference
- ✓ ASPIRA's Statewide Conference
- ✓ Abilities Expo
- ✓ Brain Injury Association's Annual Conference
- ✓ Spina Bifida Associations Annual Conference
- ✓ New Jersey Association for the Education of Young Children Statewide Conference
- ✓ Head Start Disability Coordinators' Annual Conference
- ✓ New Jersey Disability Council Annual Statewide Disabilities Convention
- ✓ Public Education Institute's bimonthly forums for teachers, administrators, parents and advocates
- ✓ Center for Nonprofits Legislature Conference
- ✓ Governor's Conference on Women
- ✓ ABC-Black Christian Educators' Conference
- ✓ Newark Public Schools Conference on Whole School Reform
- ✓ Whole School Reform in Urban Districts Convocation
- ✓ New Jersey Head Start Regional Conference and Newark Citywide Conference
- ✓ New Jersey Parent Coordinators Statewide Conference
- ✓ Essex County Health Fair Family Day
- ✓ New Jersey KidCare Forum
- ✓ East Orange Public Schools Community Resource Fair

- ✓ New Jersey Equity and Standards Conference
- ✓ International Dyslexia Association-New Jersey Parent Involvement Conference
- ✓ Map to Inclusive Child Care Summit
- ✓ School-Age Child Care Annual Statewide Conference
- ✓ Annual In-service Day for NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- ✓ NJ Coalition for Inclusive Education Annual Meeting and workshops
- ✓ NJ Developmental Disabilities Council Partners in Policymaking
- ✓ Coalition of Infant and Toddler Educators Annual Conference
- ✓ Prevent Child Abuse-New Jersey Parent Involvement Conference
- ✓ NJS PTA Annual Conference
- ✓ Unified Child Care Agency conferences in 6 counties
- ✓ "Teach for America" Conference/Seminar
- ✓ Home Health Assembly of New Jersey Winter Membership Forum
- ✓ Jersey City Transition Fair
- ✓ Cherry Hill Conference for Parents of Children with Special Needs
- ✓ Annual Down Syndrome Conference
- ✓ SSI Alliance Legislative Day
- ✓ School Fear-School Peace Regional Conference @ New York University
- ✓ Parents' Anonymous Statewide Conference
- ✓ UCP Assistive Technology Conference

SPAN Materials have also been disseminated at the following national conferences:

- ✓ The Alliance National and Regional conferences
- ✓ National Parent Network on Disabilities IDEA Implementation & Enforcement Conference
- ✓ US Department of Health and Human Services Region II Conference
- ✓ National Title I Parent Conference
- ✓ National Coalition of Advocates for Children's Annual Conference
- ✓ US Department of Education's Improving America's Schools Act Conference
- ✓ National Coalition of Education Activists' National Conference
- ✓ Institute for Child Health Conference
- ✓ National African-American Parent Involvement Day Annual Conference
- ✓ National Coalition of Education Activists' Annual Conference
- ✓ SAMSHA National Conference on "Parenting IS Prevention"
- ✓ US DOE Reading Conference

SPAN publications have been distributed to:

- ✓ Superintendents of 63 urban districts
- ✓ New Jersey Black Issues Convention
- ✓ New Jersey Conference of Urban Leagues
- ✓ New Jersey Junior League
- ✓ Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
- ✓ Tri-County People's Corporation (Newark)
- ✓ Seton Hall University Center for Social Justice and Rutgers Law Clinic and Non-Profit Management Scholars
- ✓ Community Health Law Project
- ✓ Programs for Parents
- ✓ Parent Education Network of Newark
- ✓ Unified Vailsburg Service Organization of Newark

- ✓ Special Child Health Services Case Management Units (providing service coordination for early intervention and case management for children ages 3-21 with disabilities or special health care needs)
- ✓ Organizations in the New Jersey Developmental Disabilities Council Resources Guide
- ✓ New Jersey Legislative Committee on Children
- ✓ Joint Legislative Committee on Children
- ✓ Success by Six
- ✓ Institute for Education Policy
- ✓ Prevent Child Abuse-New Jersey Resource Center
- ✓ Community Outreach, INC.
- ✓ New Jersey Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
- ✓ UMDNJ's Autism Prevalence Study
- ✓ The ARC of New Jersey

SPAN materials were also disseminated through partnership with organizations such as the New Jersey Foster Parents Association; DD Council Education Subcommittee; United Way; New Jersey Congress of PTAs and County PTA Councils; New Jersey Title I Parent Coordinators, the Association for Children of New Jersey; Prevent Child Abuse-NJ (New Jersey's previous Goals 2000 grantee), the Education Law Center, the Urban Parents Educational Institute, the Jersey City, East Orange and Newark PTA/PTSOs, Title I Advisory Councils, and Special Education Parents' Councils, and ASPIRA-NJ. A "First Contact" informational brochure was sent to over 90,000 families and professionals featuring information on SPAN.

SPAN materials were disseminated through our Community Resource Centers, including through our two CRC websites, which had a total of more than 56,800 contacts. SPAN is also featured in several county Community Access Resource databases. Information about SPAN's Family Voices chapter was featured on the websites of the world Council on Disability, Exceptional Parent, national Family Voices, and National Family Caregivers.

Magazine articles about SPAN include several articles about SPAN projects in several issues of *Families* magazine (a magazine of the Developmental Disabilities Council); a special issue of *People with Disabilities* magazine, focusing entirely on special education and featuring several articles by SPAN staff or about SPAN projects and activities; *The Beacon*, the newspaper of the Catholic Diocese of Paterson, featured several articles on SPAN's Multilingual Center, including one on the special Mass; *Exceptional Parent* magazine, which featured several articles on or by SPAN staff; and *Sesame Street* magazine.

Newspapers covering SPAN or SPAN positions on policy issues include the Trenton Times, the Star Ledger, the Bergen Record, the Atlantic City Press, the Asbury Park Press, the Courier Post, the Jersey Journal, the Home News Tribune; the Philadelphia Inquirer, the Associated Press, and Knight Rider News Services, among others. Articles covered issues such as the federal monitoring visit to New Jersey in February 2002, updates about the status of the monitoring, and the parent forums; the importance of and strategies for parent involvement; Family Voices services; the Governor's Proclamation honoring Family Caregiver Month (secured by Family Voices at SPAN staff); parent involvement in school reform; special education funding; and KidCare. SPAN was asked by the Star Ledger to collaborate with their education reporter on a series of articles on special education, and in addition, to write a monthly column on education for the paper.

Television and radio appearances included discussions of the challenges of raising children with special needs; the impact of managed care on families with children with special needs; SPAN services; the State Special Education Code changes; and parent leadership, parent involvement, and school reform in urban districts. Several Parent Leadership Development Institute interns appeared on Newark cable television with the district superintendent on the show, "On Line with Education."

Other outreach included:

- ✓ Continuing dissemination of information about Family Voices and SPAN through the New Jersey Academy of Pediatrics and to 300+ organizations
- ✓ Continuing dissemination of information about SPAN, Family Voices, and New Jersey Parent to Parent through the 21 county-based Special Child Health Services service coordination and case management units
- ✓ Press releases when we opened our regional and Community Resource Centers to families to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of IDEA
- ✓ Biweekly mailings to 55 SPAN staff and approximately 50 Resource Parents, including updates on education research, legislative and regulatory proposals, and other information of interest.
- ✓ Dissemination of action alerts on the State Special Education Code; the Standards and Assessment Code; Abbott regulations revisions on early childhood, parent involvement, school management teams, and whole school reform; proposed early childhood curriculum standards and frameworks; special education funding; and the Children's System of Care initiative implementation to our membership, Parents Engaged in Public Policy network, Parent Leadership Development Institute graduates, SPAN Resource Parents, Multilingual Center support group network, county-based Special Child Health Services Case Management Units, disability specific organizations, and other agencies serving families of children with special needs (over 2,000 individuals and agencies).

Objective 8. Collaboration with SCHS Project CARE/Staff Development Opportunities

SPAN conducted a total of 18 joint statewide staff meetings/professional development opportunities. Inservices were conducted on education issues/whole school reform in urban districts, with a special emphasis on early childhood, lead poisoning and prevention. Staff participated in revising and updating SPAN's strategic plan; during another meeting , staff identified the priority areas for focus in the last 2 years of the grant and identified revisions to the OSERS project for reapplication in 2 years. SPAN has sponsored the attendance of OSERS and SCHS staff at conferences and Medicaid managed care; SSI; Parent-to-Parent support; Family Voices; school reform; National African-American Parent Involvement Day; ADD/ADHD; autism; the national and regional TA Alliance; SAMSHA conference on developing systems of care for children with mental health needs; social-emotional intelligence and learning; family support; positive behavioral supports; Solution Circles; forums sponsored by the Public Education Institute; the Institute for Education and Social Policy at NYU), the Annenberg Institute, the Improving America's Schools conference; Standards & Assessment sponsored by the New Jersey City University, and the New Jersey State Department of Education, among others.

Train-the-trainer sessions were held for OSERS, SCHS, and other project staff on Inclusion; Positive Behavioral Supports and Discipline; IEP; Monitoring, Enforcement, and Accountability; Section 504; IDEA and the new State Special Education Code; Special Education and School Reform; Transition to Adult Life; and Title I services; Conflict Resolution, and Parent-Professional Collaboration. Also, Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families and Communities; the Right Question Project; Solution Circles; Social Problem-Solving; and MAPS and PATH planning processes train-the-trainer sessions were conducted. In addition, OSERS and SCHS project directors and coordinators participated in an all-day Enlightened Leadership conference to improve leadership and collaborative skills.

Objective 10. Community Education Project

SPAN's Community Education Project continues to serve low-income families of color in the urban communities of Essex County and surrounding urban areas. CEP was directed by Newark resident, Nicole Harper, for the first four years of the grant and then was succeeded by Zoie Barnett in the final year (and continuing under the new grant). Ms.Barnett is a long time East Orange resident. She started a special education parent advisory group in East Orange, and is also on the Title I Parent Advisory Council. Ms. Barnett developed a districtwide parents' council that brings together all the district's parent leaders. She organized 30 parents to file a complaint investigation with the New Jersey Department of Education regarding noncompliance in East Orange. She is a member of the Board of the New Jersey Parents' Caucus for Children's Mental Health, an affiliate of the National Association of Families for Children's Mental Health and is involved in the Childrens' Initiative/Children's System of Care for children with mental/emotional disabilities. Zoie has been trained intensively on Positive Behavioral Supports and provides technical assistance around positive behavior support plans. She is assisted by Geraldine Moore, also a resident of Newark, who is a graduate of the Newark Parent Leadership Development Institute.

Our Community Education project has been expanded by the development of our Parent Leadership Development Institutes, which are provided in each of the 30 Abbott districts throughout New Jersey. Several graduates have volunteered their time to support SPAN staff throughout the 5 years of the grant.

In addition, intensive support has been provided to early childhood centers throughout the state in strategies to include children with special needs, and to families with young children in Abbott districts through our Parents As Teachers program.

The Community Education Project has conducted 75 trainings for more than 1,425 parents and professionals; provided telephone technical assistance to 2,556 parents and professionals; and assisted over 500 parents directly through attendance at IEP and other meetings.

The Community Education Project has also convened opportunities for special education parents to meet with their superintendents in Newark and East Orange to present their concerns. In collaboration with the Newark PAC and the Newark Public Schools, SPAN presented a series of trainings (Basic Rights, IEP, and Inclusion) at five locations throughout the district to families and professionals. The series of trainings were repeated several more times during the course of the grant.

During the five year grant, CEP staff met with and provided information to numerous community-based groups, service providers, and public officials, including:

- ✓ Staff at each of Newark's and East Orange's elementary, middle and high schools
- ✓ Catholic Family Services
- ✓ The Leaguers Head Start (Newark and Irvington)
- ✓ Newark Board of Education Parent Coordinator, & Pre-K Coordinator
- ✓ Newark Preschool Council; Mt. Sinai Head Start; Mt. Carmel Guild Preschool
- ✓ St. Michael's Medical Center; Newark-Beth Israel Medical Center; Children's Hospital (Newark)
- ✓ CHADD of Essex County
- ✓ Newark Emergency Services 4th Annual Conference
- ✓ Newark South Asian Women's Domestic Violence Committee
- ✓ New Community Home Healthcare Program

- ✓ Prevent Child Abuse-NJ
- ✓ Seton Hall University, Essex County College; NJ Institute of Technology
- ✓ Salvation Army of East Orange & Newark Salvation Army Grandparernts' Group
- ✓ Foundation Health Corporation/Work First Advisory Program
- ✓ Newark Good Starts Program
- ✓ NJ Citizen Action-Lead Poisoning Prevention Project
- ✓ East Orange School District Parent Fair; East Orange School District personnel
- ✓ Newark Child Study Team members and Guidance and Attendance Counselors
- ✓ Bank Street College of Education Project New Beginnings (Newark)
- ✓ Aspen Group; University Behavioral Health Care (Children with behavioral issues)
- ✓ CPC of Essex & West Hudson Counties
- ✓ Staff of Congressman Donald Payne and State Senator Ronald Rice
- ✓ University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey-Newark Campus, among others.

Objective 11. Multilingual Center Project

SPAN's Multilingual Center Project, a collaboration with Catholic Family and Community Services of Paterson, has conducted trainings/forums for over 4,780 parents and professionals: provided telephone technical assistance to 13,670 parents and professionals; and assisted over 1,600 parents directly through attendance at IEP meetings and home visits. Workshops included:

- ✓ Basic Rights
- ✓ Focus group for families of children with special emotional needs
- ✓ Focus group on Bright Futures for families of children with special healthcare needs
- ✓ Parental Rights in Special Education
- ✓ Inclusion
- ✓ Guardianship and Estate Planning
- ✓ Opening Doors/Abriendo Puertas (a video presentation)
- ✓ Changes to IDEA
- ✓ Defining Advocacy and your Role in Public Policy Making
- ✓ Strategies for Effective Participation in Public Policy
- ✓ Positive Behavioral Supports and Techniques to Use at Home
- ✓ An Informal Chat Session for Parents of Children with Disabilities (to share experiences)
- ✓ How to Reduce AIDS in Infants.

The Multilingual Center opened a new Parent Center, "A Parent's Place/El Club de los Padres," modeled on the parent center sponsored by the Federation for Children with Special Needs in Boston. They solicited funds from local service organizations and private donors to cover the cost of new furnishings and renovations of a beautiful old convent.

The Director of the Multilingual Center, who also serves on the Board of SPAN, is a member of the Governing Board of New Jersey Protection and Advocacy and the University Affiliated Program Consumer Advisory Board. She also served on the Monitoring Self-Assessment Steering Committee for the Paterson School District, and organized a group of 9 Latino families who were interviewed when the State monitors came to Paterson. The staff of the Multilingual Center continue to build alliances with many organizations, including the Paterson Education Fund, the Passaic County Sheriff's Office and Legal Aid Office, the Paterson Police Department, early childhood centers, St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center Mental Health and other clinics, the Passaic County Board of Social Services, the Education Law Center, the Association for Children of New Jersey, and whole school reform model developers.

The Multilingual Center has also convened opportunities for special education parents to meet with the new State-appointed superintendent of Paterson Public Schools, in collaboration with the Paterson School District's Department of Special Services.

The Multilingual Center continues to collaborate with several churches that are involved in a migrant and immigrant ministry. They have worked with many migrant and immigrant families who are experiencing difficulties with health and school issues, including the refusal of several districts to allow their children to register. They have also established a networking relationship with the Paterson Housing Authority, receiving referrals from the Housing Authority of families who need assistance with their children's education and health.

The Multilingual Center also coordinated, for each year of the grant, a "Christmas Mass" of inclusion for children and adults with disabilities with approximately 2,300 participants.

In addition, the Multilingual Center provides a summer day camp program offering recreational activities, three days a week, for children without extended school year services, and respite. The camp served a total of 60 children in five years. The Multilingual Center has conducted extensive outreach to community-based organizations and institutions serving Spanish-speaking families, including schools, social service agencies, churches, hospitals, doctors, and other professionals. The Multilingual Center sent information on their services to radio and cable TV stations, and was featured on WHAI-TV 43. The Center has continued to expand its bilingual resources library, in addition to videotaping Spanish language trainings. Staff from the Multilingual Center has presented at SPAN's annual conference

The Passaic County Family Court office routinely refers families to the Multilingual Center for support. The Center offers intensive support to Spanish-speaking families of children with special needs, including referral and assistance on survival issues (food, clothing, rent assistance, utility bills, vitamins, medications, transportation to medical appointments, Medicaid, Food Stamps, Welfare, immigration issues, etc.).

The Multilingual Center organizes Christmas Celebrations where the children and adults with and without disabilities participate in a Holiday Pageant, allowing their gifts and talents to be seen by the wider community. Over 600 people participated in each celebration. In the last year of the grant, the Multilingual Center also sponsored a "Mass for Peace," which honored SPAN's Executive Co-Director, Diana Autin, as a symbol of peace for her work on behalf of children and families.

The Center also sponsored 36 athletes to participate in the regional and state Special Olympics. The Multilingual Center staff provided the opportunity for two months of practice for the entire group, as well as supervision and support for 14-20 athletes to go to Trenton. Parents working at the Multilingual Center raised funds to pay for an overnight stay at a local hotel for 20 young adults with disabilities.

The Multilingual Center assisted dozens of Latino families to file a complaint with the US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, against the Paterson Public Schools for discriminatory practices in bilingual education.

The Multilingual Center translated materials for SPAN and also translated the invitation for the federal monitoring visit into Spanish for the New Jersey State Department of Education.

Objective 12. More intensive support and tailored information for underserved communities

As noted above, SPAN's Community Education Project and Multilingual Center Project staff attended meetings with families; made phone calls, wrote letters and provided linkages to other services for families; provided referral assistance to underserved families; and assisted in the development of targeted information for underserved families, in English and Spanish. In addition, SPAN adapted its training programs for underserved families, to ensure that families understood the information presented. For example, our Basic Rights training was presented over several sessions for families who participated in our Community Education and Multilingual Center projects

Objective 13. UAP Collaboration

SPAN has continued its collaboration with the University Affiliated Program of New Jersey (UAP) on the Early Invention Procedural Safeguards Project, providing "refresher training to mediators and hearing officer panelists, and two-day trainings to new service coordinators and service providers. Approximately 1,500 people have participated in trainings on the system requirements of early intervention, procedural safeguards, and conflict resolution mechanisms to date.

SPAN has continued to collaborate with the UAP on the New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education. SPAN and the UAP are both represented on the Coalition's Board of Directors, and have conducted trainings and disseminated information on inclusion for the Coalition. The Coalition offered a series of trainings on Solution Circles, Social Problem-Solving, and the Maps and PATH planning processes; Inclusive IEP Forums; and Inclusion Focus Groups. Each workshop or forum was provided at four regional locations.

SPAN Resource Parents continued to host third year medical students in their pediatric rotation at New Jersey's state medical school in collaborative project with the UAP, the Medical Student Education Project, featured below.

The UAP is a subcontractor on SPAN's Map to Inclusive Child Care training, information and technical assistance grant from the New Jersey Department of Human Services Division of Family Development. Karen Melzer of the UAP is a trainer and on-site inclusion implementation consultant for the project. She disseminated information on this project at her workshops with early childhood and special education directors of the 30 Abbott districts, which all must offer universal early childhood education to all 3 and 4 year olds under a New Jersey Supreme Court decision.

Finally, SPAN's Co-Executive Director (Diana Autin) and PTI Director (Debra Fernande) continue to serve on the UAP's Consumer Advisory Council.

Objective 14. Expand In-Service Development Activities

SPAN conducted numerous professional development workshops, including:

- ✓ National Association for the Education of Young Children-New Jersey State Conferences, on inclusion and child care, and numerous child care referral and resource agency conferences on child care, as well as the statewide conference for after-school child care
- ✓ New Jersey Education Association's Annual Convention (on Multiple Intelligences, and Collaborating with Parents on School Management Teams)

- ✓ Pre-service presentations to colleges, including Kean University, The College of New Jersey (formerly Trenton State), Georgian Court College, the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Seton Hall University School of Education, among others
- ✓ Early Intervention trainings for service coordinators and service providers
- ✓ Trainings for Head Start staff in urban districts on parent-professional collaboration, the new IDEA/new State Code, and inclusive child care laws and strategies
- ✓ Children's Specialized Hospital, Newark-Beth Israel, St Michael's Medical Center, etc.
- ✓ Kean University Forum on Core Curriculum Content Standards (keynote on impact on special education students)
- ✓ Teaching Kean University's "Families in Special Education" course in the summer of 1999
- ✓ Special Child Health Services Case managers on impact of managed care on families of children with special health care needs; Parent-to-Parent services; Map to Inclusive Child Care project, and Family Resource Associate services
- ✓ New IDEA/State Code, to all teachers and supervisors of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- ✓ A series of workshops with principals on including parents as partners in the education of their children, and in school improvement activities, including school management teams
- ✓ Special Education and School Reform to urban superintendents, directors of special services, teachers and parents, at the Abbott Convocation, teachers, Child Study Team members, and parents at the International Dyslexia Association –New Jersey chapter annual conference, teachers and Child Study team members at Prevent Child Abuse-New Jersey's annual conference, and to general and special educators at a Middlesex County Educational Services Commission professional development session on inclusion
- ✓ Inclusive child care laws and implementation strategies, to more than 2,000 child care providers, child study team members, and parents, in all of New Jersey's 21 counties, through workshops and on-site technical assistance visits
- ✓ New Jersey's Institute of Technology's Project SMART (Math and science teachers): Child Study Team members & counselors; parents; teachers
- ✓ Training for NJ CART/DYFS/Youth Services Commission/Juvenile Justice Commission members (positive behavioral supports)
- ✓ Advocacy Institute development of training modules on public policy advocacy
- ✓ Education advocacy: Section 504 & IDEA, Legal Services of New York
- ✓ Montessori program – Morris County
- ✓ Family Resource Associates
- ✓ The ARC of Atlantic County
- ✓ The ARC of Hunterdon County
- ✓ Accessing Community Resources: Developing Creative Solutions with Families (a panel discussion sponsored by the UAP of New Jersey
- ✓ National Lawyers' Guild 60th Anniversary Convention (a panel discussion organized by SPAN for lawyers on School Reform: Does "All" Mean "All?":How School reform Excludes Children of Color, Children with Special Needs, Poor Children, and Language-Minority Children and Families)
- ✓ Parents and Professionals Conference: Working Together for the Special Child, sponsored by the Association for Special Children and Families and the Center for Family Resources, SPAN's Passaic County Community Resource Center
- ✓ DDC Inclusion Framework and Curriculum Projects
- ✓ New Jersey Education Association Convention (Section 504)
- ✓ Guarini Center for Governmental Affairs Conference, "A Generation at Risk: Children and the Future of our Nation" (St.Peter's College, Jersey City).
- ✓ Prevent Child Abuse-New Jersey's Technical Assistance Program (trainings for professionals on resources available for families of children with special needs)

School districts and professionals are able to receive continuing professional education credits by attending SPAN workshops, as SPAN is registered as an approved professional development provider.

Objective 15. Medical Student Education Project

SPAN and the UAP continued collaboration for the duration of the grant on the Medical Student Education/Family-Centered Care Project, where all third year medical students participate in a day-long program on developmental disabilities, including an evening visit with the family. During the five-year grant, over 225 medical students have visited with 80 SPAN Resource Parents.

Objective 16. Provide family perspective on task forces, to policymakers, etc.

SPAN staff and Resource Parents continued to provide the family perspective on task forces, committees, and to elected and administrative policymakers. SPAN also worked in collaboration with other advocacy and community-based organizations on issues affecting children with special needs. SPAN maintained and expanded projects that increased the capacity of families to become effective advocates for their children, including Family Voices/Bright Futures-NJ (designed to provide information to families, professionals and policymakers on issues affecting children with special health care needs); NJ Statewide Parent-to-Parent (providing orientations to experienced parent mentors and matching them with parents facing the stresses of raising a child with a disability or special health care needs); Parent Leadership Development Institute (offering knowledge and skill development in key areas of effective leadership and educational improvement for Title I, special education, school core team, and PTA parents in all 30 of the Abbott Districts); Parents Engaged in Public Policy (training parents to be effective policy advocates at the national, state and local policy levels); and the New Jersey Parents Caucus for Children's Mental Health. Examples of public policy and collaborative activities included:

- ✓ Meeting with the US DOE OCR to discuss concerns about New Jersey special education
- ✓ IDEA Implementation meeting, NJ DOE OSEP & US DOE OSEP
- ✓ Speaking with monitors from the US Department of Education – OSERS to discuss concerns about New Jersey special education, organizing hundreds of parents to attend the regional forums with the monitors, and participating on the Department of Health's Early Intervention Self-Assessment Steering Committee and Quality Assurance Work Group, and the Department of Education's Self-Assessment Steering Committee and Self-Improvement Plan/State Improvement Grant subcommittee
- ✓ Data discussions/meetings with US DOE Discipline Task Force & US DOE OCR
- ✓ Testimony in a fiscal equity litigation hearing before the Special Master, on the impact of the Comissioner's proposed urban district funding on special education students
- ✓ Education Law Center's Framework Retreat and Parent Conference on Urban School Reform
- ✓ Participating in focus groups on early childhood technical assistance at the Alliance national conference
- ✓ Children & Family Initiative-Steering Committee and Parents' Caucus (a collaboration with the Association for Children of New Jersey, the Mental Health Association, and SPAN); SPAN staff participation on the statewide implementation committee (ongoing) that is overseeing the implementation of the new Children's Initiative, based on our ten principles, that will revamp the children's mental health system, and provide more coordination, collaboration, culturally competent, and family friendly mental health services to children across agencies

- ✓ Promise the Children (impact of welfare reform on families and children)
- ✓ Public Education Institute Roundtable discussions
- ✓ Participation on the New Jersey State Department of Education's Committee to revise the Parents' Rights in Special Education booklet and in the development of a parent guide
- ✓ Participation of SPAN staff on the New Jersey Department of Education's Special Education Advisory Committee and the Early Intervention State Interagency Coordinating Council
- ✓ Membership on the Governing Board of New Jersey Protection and Advocacy
- ✓ Membership on the Consumer Advisory Board of the University-Affiliated Program of NJ
- ✓ Participation on the New Jersey State Department of Education's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Committee
- ✓ Parents Engaged in Public Policy, generating thousands of comments, letters and testimonials on the proposed changes to the NJ State special education code and the standards and assessment code, and providing information to families on new proposals
- ✓ Collaborative project with the New Jersey Department of Education to research and write a biennial newsletter on inclusion for districts and parents, and a biennial newsletter on transition to adult life
- ✓ Coalition for Special Education Funding Reform (in collaboration with the DD Council Education Committee, the ARC of New Jersey, United Cerebral Palsy, and COSAC, among others, working to ensure a placement-neutral funding formula and sufficient funding for special education)
- ✓ Participation on the State Department of Education and Jersey City University's Planning Committee for a statewide conference on core curriculum content standards
- ✓ Participation in planning for the State's conference on equity and cultural diversity
- ✓ Participation on numerous County and district Disability Committees
- ✓ Participation on Developmental Disabilities Council Education Committee and chairing the Enforcement and Accountability workgroup
- ✓ Representation of SPAN staff and Resource parents on the Advisory Committee and focus groups of the New Jersey Developmental Disabilities' Council project to research Inclusive Education Teacher Preparation
- ✓ Participation on the Governance and Accountability, and Family-Professional Collaboration workgroups of the DDC Education Subcommittee
- ✓ Participation on Workforce Incentive Board Education Committee and Transition Consortia
- ✓ Participation in Concerned African-American Parents
- ✓ Participation on numerous district special education and Title I committees and PTA Councils
- ✓ Community Health Project Advisory Committee and Managed Care Training Task Force
- ✓ Participation on New Jersey Citizen Action's Health Care Alliance, working on issues of medicaid managed care, ombudsman legislation for managed care for persons with disabilities, KidCare (New Jersey's Chip program)
- ✓ United Way Project Leadership Institute
- ✓ New Jersey Department of Human Services' Map to Inclusive Child Care Advisory Committee (4 SPAN staff serve on this committee, including one of our Co-Executive Directors; our southern OSERS coordinator and southern Parent-to-Parent Regional Associate; our Family Voices-NJ co-coordinator; and our Family Resource Specialist at the Morris County Special Child Health Services Case management unit)
- ✓ Participation on the New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education's Board
- ✓ Participation on advisory committees or conducting training for collaborative groups of districts and higher education institutions on inclusive education, family involvement, and school reform

- ✓ Membership in National Parent Network on Disabilities and National Coalition of Advocates for Students
- ✓ SPAN testimony before the New Jersey Board of Education; Joint Legislative Committee on Public Schools; Legislative Committee on Children; Appropriations Committees; New Jersey Department of Health-Maternal and Child Health Services; and New Jersey Department of Human Services
- ✓ Participation on the Exceptional Parent Magazine Advisory Editorial Board
- ✓ Membership on the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans' Association Managed Care Network, SSI Alliance, Medicaid Alliance, Medicaid Workgroup for People with Disabilities, Family Support Center Advisory Board, Family Support Awareness Day Planning Committee, and Title V Dissemination Committee
- ✓ Membership on the Board of the New Jersey Association of Partners in Education
- ✓ Collaborative project with the New Jersey Department of Education to develop, disseminate and analyze parent surveys on special education compliance and quality
- ✓ Participation of SPAN's Executive Director on the New Jersey Department of Education's task force to revise their monitoring system
- ✓ Annenberg Institute for School Reform Conference on Public Engagement
- ✓ Participation on Developmental Disabilities Council Education Committee and Inclusion Consensus-Building Process, including the second annual Summit on Inclusion, chairing the Community Awareness and Access to Inclusion Workgroup, which has developed an introductory inclusion awareness training module that was presented in every county and every urban district (SPAN's Executive Director conducted two Train the Trainer for workgroup members) and chairing the Enforcement and Accountability workgroup
- ✓ Prevent Child Abuse-New Jersey Goals 2000 Advisory Committee until we received the grant in October, 1999
- ✓ New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services' Early Intervention Stakeholders' Task Force, which has been awarded the Department 's Health collaboration award, and follow-up committees including the Service Delivery workgroup, the Autism Task Force, and the Quality Assurance Workgroup
- ✓ New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services' and Department of Education's Transition to Preschool
- ✓ Membership on Nation Public Education Network's National Parent Involvement in Education Advisory Panel
- ✓ Chairperson of the State Interagency Coordinating Council, and continuing membership on that council
- ✓ Participation and sponsorship of the national Family Voices study of families and managed care, and follow-up interviews with managed care providers
- ✓ Participation as a Contributor to the "Defining Medical Necessity" report of the US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau

The family perspective has also been presented through media outlets, including numerous newspaper interviews and articles on issues such as school reform, funding for urban districts, funding for special education, inclusion, changes to the state special education code, parent involvement, health issues affecting children with special needs, family support, and other issues.

SPAN staff and Resource Parents have represented the parent perspective at meetings with over 50,000 people over the past five years; over 3,000 SPAN staff and Resource Parents have testified at State Board of Education meetings, legislative hearings, and other public policy forums.

Honors and Awards

SPAN staff received the following honors and awards:

- ✓ Selection by the Advocacy Institute to chair the Regional Selection Committee for the Leadership for a Changing World Fellowship (Co-Executive Director Diana Autin)
- ✓ Continued participation on National Advocacy Advisory Panel of the Advocacy Institute (Co-Executive Director Diana Autin)
- ✓ Selection as a Fellow for the Next Generation of Leadership Program of the Rockefeller Foundation (Co-Executive Director Diana Autin)
- ✓ Nomination as a Fellow for the Leadership for a Changing World program of the Ford Foundation (Co-Executive Director Debra Jennings)
- ✓ Selected to serve on the SICC and DD Council, the State EI and Education Monitoring Steering Committee.
- ✓ Certificates of Appreciation were received from the New Jersey Head Start Association and Quality Improvement Center at New York University and Title I parents, as well as Child and Family Resources and the International Dyslexia Association-NJ Chapter. One staff person was honored with the Advocacy Award from the East Orange Unified PTA Council.

The SPAN website also has been the recipient of the Freedom of Thought award.

Evaluation

As outlined in the project proposal, SPAN disseminates and analyzes evaluation sheets for trainings conducted by SPAN staff and Resource Parents. In addition, SPAN disseminates an evaluation survey whenever we send parents material in response to requests for technical assistance. Responses from both the training evaluation forms and the evaluation surveys received are overwhelmingly positive, with every respondent indicating that SPAN's trainings, technical assistance and materials have proved extremely beneficial. Annually, SPAN hires a consultant to follow up with parents who have participated in trainings and/or received technical assistance. Finally, SPAN's Evaluation Committee and the Board of Trustees discussed project progress during our quarterly Board of Trustees meetings, and then concluded its final discussion at the Annual Meeting.

IV. Budget Information

See attached Budget Summary, describing expenditures in each area and providing an overall explanation of any deviations from the project budget.

Project CARE

Project CARE is a partnership between **Special Child Health Services** and the **Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN)** created to strengthen the relationship between Case Management Units and families. Our Family Resource Specialists are parents of children with disabilities who are trained to help other parents.

Ways the Family Resource Specialist can help:

* As a listener, recognizing the unique needs of diverse families

* Supporting parents at home or in the hospital, at education planning meetings and through support groups

* Guiding families and professionals toward resources and educational and recreational information

* Providing technical assistance and support to parents at key transitions throughout their child's development (transition to preschool, to elementary school, to secondary education, and from school to adult life)

* Collaborating with agencies at local, city and state levels to make programs and policies more family-centered and easily accessible to all families

* Strengthening parent capacity to advocate for their child across systems by providing technical assistance and relevant workshops

Project CARE
Patricia Paraskevacos, Project Coordinator
(973) 523-6778 x19

New Jersey Statewide
Parent to Parent

Parent to Parent is a statewide network of parents supporting families of children with developmental delays, disabilities, or other special health needs.

As trained "supporting parents," we act as a valuable resource to families. We offer assistance in learning the necessary skills to help parents face the challenges of raising their child.

We are not counselors or therapists. We are parents who have experienced the feelings and emotions that come after learning that our children have a developmental delay, disability, or other special health needs. We offer moral support and encourage parents to feel comfortable and optimistic about the future.

Parent to Parent is dedicated to supporting families at their most challenging times and to celebrating each new victory. Parents helping parents... it's a simple concept that works.

What Parent to Parent Offers

* One-to-one matches of families with similar needs and experiences
* Emotional support for the parent of a child with a developmental delay, disability, or special health needs
* Current local, state and national resources for the child and family on a variety of disabilities and health issues
* Training for parents who would like to become "supporting parents"

All information is kept confidential.

New Jersey Statewide Parent to Parent
Malia Corde, Project Coordinator
(908) 537-4673

FAMILY ♡OICES
NEW JERSEY

About 100,000 New Jersey children face chronic or acute health conditions that may limit their school and play activities. Where do these families turn for health care guidance? A friendly voice? Words of encouragement?

Family Voices can help. We inform families and professionals about public and private health care changes in our state. We also share the expertise and experiences of families with policy makers, the media, health professionals and other families. We serve on state and local boards and task forces, bringing the family perspective to policy discussions and decisions.

Family Voices Principles:

* Families are the core of any health system and should be respected and valued for our expertise and commitment to our children
* Combining talents and resources in a good family-professional partnership creates the best relationship for managing the care of our children with special health care needs
* An effective, flexible health care system should be guided by medical and family needs
* Comprehensive, coordinated, community-based primary and specialty health care should be available at a reasonable price for all families
* Families and health care professionals should be responsible for quality assurance on health care financing and delivery

Help us make sure that children with special health care needs in New Jersey receive the services they need!

Family Voices
Lauren Agoratus & Beverly Bowser, NJ Co-Coordinators
(800) 654-SPAN x110

What Family WRAP *Does*

The Statewide Parent Advocacy Network of New Jersey (SPAN), in collaboration with the Family Support Center and the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services Special Child Health Services, has expanded and enhanced our services to families of children with special needs. Family WRAP provides one-stop, "wrap-around" services, information, resources and support to families of children with disabilities, developmental delays and special health care needs. Family WRAP combines three SPAN programs: Family Resource Specialists/Project CARE, Parent to Parent, and Family Voices.

Family Resource Coordination/Project CARE

SPAN Family Resource Specialists are stationed part-time at Special Child Health Services/Case Management Units in Bergen, Camden, Essex, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Passaic, Union, and Sussex counties. They provide information and advocacy on family rights in the early intervention and special education processes, and resources such as parent support groups and respite care. They support families at IEP meetings, health care appointments, and hospital visits, and help families resolve conflicts with school and healthcare staff.

Parent to Parent

Through Parent to Parent, four Regional Associates (northwest, northeast, central and south), a Bergen-Passaic Coordinator, and an Essex County Coordinator housed in SPAN's Newark office, can match families of children with disabilities or special health care needs with "supporting parents." They are also available to conduct orientations for parent groups and individual parents interested in becoming "supporting parents," to build skills in effective listening, active communication, parent empowerment strategies, and methods of providing support. The Family Support Center of New Jersey provides families with crucial information about their child's special needs, available resources, and support.

Family Voices

Family Voices coordinators provide telephone assistance and training on health care, health coverage, and effective health advocacy and informed decision-making. They have free literature and a newsletter available to help you advocate on behalf of your child's health, insurance information and other medical issues affecting children with special needs. They can also provide information on New Jersey FamilyCare for your children and family.

Contact Information

For assistance from a Family Resource Specialist:
Patricia Paraskevacos, Project Coordinator, Family WRAP
Passaic County Special Child Health Services
Case Management Unit
279 Carroll Street · Paterson, NJ 07501
(973) 523-6778 x19

For Parent to Parent support and
immediate information on your child's disability:
Eileen Coyne, Director
The Family Support Center of New Jersey
(800) 372-6510

For information about New Jersey Statewide Parent to Parent:
Malia Corde, Statewide Coordinator
c/o SPAN · 35 Halsey Street, 4th Floor · Newark, NJ 07102
(908) 537-4673
parent2parent@spannj.org

For information about statewide Family Voices:
Lauren Agoratus (English & Spanish) & Beverly Bowser,
New Jersey Co-Coordinators
(800) 654-SPAN x110
familyvoices@spannj.org

For Essex Family WRAP (funded by the Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey), or to schedule an Essex County
Parent to Parent orientation or Family Voices presentation:
Shirley Johnson, Essex Family WRAP Co-coordinator
c/o SPAN · 35 Halsey Street, 3rd Floor · Newark, NJ 07102
(973) 642-8100 x112 · Fax (973) 642-8080

Program Funders

NJ Department of Health and Senior Services,
Special Child Health Adult and Early Intervention Services

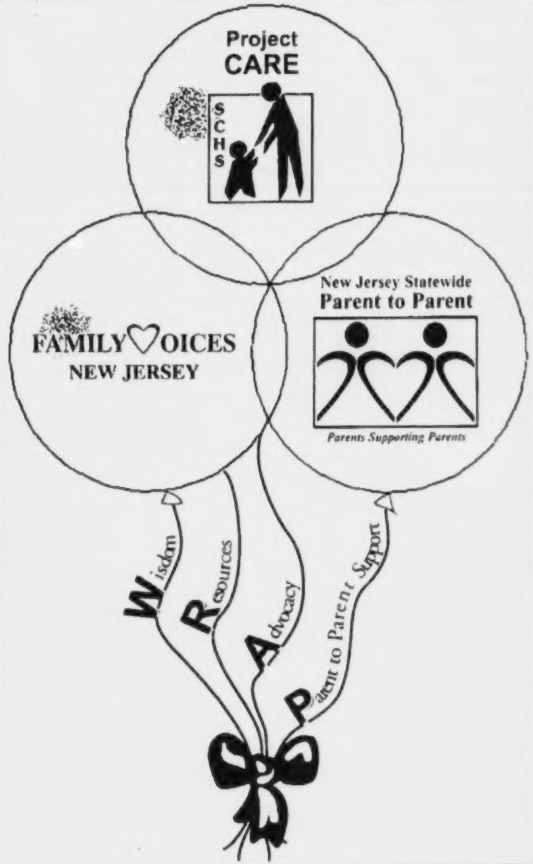
The Healthcare Foundation of NJ

The Edward and Stella Van Houten Memorial Trust

Collaborating Agencies

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Family Voices-NJ at SPAN
NJ Department of Health & Senior Services
Family Support Center of New Jersey

Family WRAP



Supporting and Connecting Families to Quality Educational and Health Services

THE SPAN PARENT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

The SPAN Parent Leadership Development Institute (PLDI) believes that parents and families play crucial roles in improving schools and achieving student success. Parents can be effective partners with professionals in planning, implementing and evaluating educational programs for children. But to do so, parents must:

- Believe in their own strengths
- Anticipate a future of choices and fulfillment for their children
- Have access to the information and skills necessary for informed participation

THERE IS NO COST FOR PARTICIPATION

Child care is provided. Translation is available upon request. Your local parent organization may be able to host this series at no cost. Call for details.

THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE YOU WILL GAIN

The SPAN Parent Leadership Development Institute offers extensive training through an eight-session program of hands-on activities focusing on key areas of effective leadership and school improvement. Participants will gain knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- Techniques for effective communication, collaboration, teamwork and consensus-building
- Qualities and components of effective schools that meet the needs of students from diverse cultures and backgrounds, and with diverse learning styles
- The relevant federal and state laws, regulations and court mandates in place to assist you in improving your school
- Understanding school finance and budgeting
- How to monitor and evaluate your school's effectiveness in achieving the No Child Left Behind Act, the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards, and your School District's achievement goals
- How to support other parents in their efforts to participate in their children's education and school improvement activities
- Where and how to locate essential services and resources for student success and improved parent involvement

Participants experience
increased self-confidence
by applying the skills and knowledge
gained in the weekly activities.

JOIN A STATEWIDE NETWORK OF PARENTS COMMITTED TO IMPROVING NEW JERSEY'S SCHOOLS

Participants in PLDI become part of a network of parents supporting community efforts to improve student learning. Parents often feel that they are alone in their work. Through PLDI, parents receive technical assistance and support in addressing their school, district, state and federal concerns about improving student success.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND THE INSTITUTE?

If you want to make a difference in the education of children in your school, your neighborhood or in the entire public school system, you are ready to attend the SPAN Parent Leadership Development Institute.

This program is a must if you are a member of your School's Management Team, an officer or executive board member of your schools' parent organization, a member of the Title I Advisory Council, Bilingual Education or Special Education Parent Advisory Council. This is the place where you will gain the knowledge you need to effectively participate in these important roles.

A PUBLIC-PRIVATE COLLABORATION

Funding is provided by:

The US Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

Parent Information & Resource Centers Program

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you would like to bring the Parent Leadership Development Institute to your school, community or parent organization, please contact SPAN

Statewide
Parent
Advocacy
Network

35 Halsey Street, 4th Floor
Newark, New Jersey 07102

phone: (800) 654-SPAN(7726)
or (973) 642-8100
fax: (973) 642-8080

email: span@spannj.org
website: www.spannj.org

PARENT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

PARENTS MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR NEW JERSEY'S PUBLIC SCHOOL CHILDREN

Statewide
Parent
Advocacy
Network

THE VIOLENCE PREVENTION INITIATIVE PROVIDES: INFORMATION, SUPPORT AND TRAINING TO PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE VIOLENCE-FREE ENVIRONMENTS

Violence destroys families.

THE VIOLENCE PREVENTION INITIATIVE is sponsored by the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) and funded by the US Department of Education. The project provides information, training and support to families, schools and community organizations on methods to prevent violence and decrease the harmful effects of anger, aggression, abuse and hate.

Violence does not discriminate based on race, religion, developmental disability, education, or income. Anyone can become a victim.

- *According to the American Medical News, in America today there are:*
  - Over 40,000 firearm deaths a year.
  - Over 100,000 nonfatal gun injuries.
  - Over 100,000 rapes.
- *The US Department of Justice reported more than 840,500 gang members were estimated to be active in the US in 1999.*
- *New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women documents 85,018 domestic violence reports were made in NJ in 1999.*
- *Child sexual abuse cases in the US ran as high as 80,000 in a year.*
- *Suicide is the eighth leading cause of death in the US, third among people aged 15 to 24 and the fourth among youths 10 to 14 years of age.*
- *The National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information reports that annually 120,000 deaths are attributed to alcohol and the use of illicit drugs. This number represents 11% of preventable deaths and 6% of all deaths in the US.*

PARENT TRAINING PROGRAMS

are designed in a sequence of twelve to fourteen sessions in which alternatives to violence are explored, focusing on parents as the child's first and most influential role model.

Children from violent homes have higher risk of alcohol and/or drug abuse and juvenile delinquency.

Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families and Communities

is a research-based program presented within a cultural framework which progresses through positive discipline approaches, rites of passage, community involvement combined as vehicles to foster high self-esteem, self-discipline and social competence.

A thousand-mile journey begins with the first step.

Strengthening Families

is a scientifically proven behavior-oriented prevention/intervention program that aims to increase communication, establish and positively enforce family rules, decrease family conflict and reduce the risk of children continuing the cycle of violence and substance abuse. This program has been especially effective for substance-abusing parents and their children.

PARENT & STAFF DEVELOPMENT OFFERINGS

(1 to 2 hour segments)

Effective communication brings families together.

Conflict Resolution

closely examines behaviors which may lead to confrontation and offers methods to reducing unwanted anger, aggression, stress and resolving conflict.

Creating Positive School Environments

helps parents and educators understand the factors that contribute to positive school environments. Strategies for evaluating and improving school climate are discussed, and examples of the impact of those strategies are provided.

Effective Discipline Practices for Families

provides parents with tools for effective, consistent discipline at home.

"This program has taught me a lot of things on how to go about teaching my children responsibilities, how to deal with their behavior, and to be more open with them."

- husband and father of three, all graduates of the Strengthening Families Program Class of 2001

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Parent, School & Community PARTICIPATION RESPONSE FORM

(Please check all that apply)

Yes! I want to participate in preventing violence and improving education in my community.

I'd like to participate in the following extended workshop:
☐ Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families & Communities
☐ Strengthening Families Program

I am interested in the following one-time workshops:
☐ Conflict Resolution
☐ Creating Positive School Environments
☐ Effective Discipline Practices for Families

Yes! Our organization is interested in participating in this Violence Prevention Initiative as follows:
☐ Hosting workshops at our location
☐ Sponsoring workshops for parents
☐ Staff training in workshops
☐ Disseminating information
☐ Becoming a partner in this special initiative. Call for details.

Please describe how participating in these workshops can enhance your organization or home environment.

____
____
____
____

These services will enable me to attend workshops:
☐ Transportation
☐ Child Care (number of children: ___)
☐ Translation from English to ______________
☐ Other (accessibility, etc.): ______________

I am most available to attend workshops at this time:
☐ Mornings ☐ Afternoons ☐ Evenings ☐ Weekends

Name ______________________________
Address ______________________________
____
Phone ______________________________

Violence Prevention Coordinators

Northern Region	Southern Region
Sh'corah Yehudah	Beverly Bowser
c/o SPAN	c/o YWCA
35 Halsey Street, 4th Floor	140 East Hanover Street
Newark, NJ 07102	Room 302/306
(973) 642-8100 x113	Trenton, NJ 08608
(973) 642-3766 fax	(609) 394-5900
vpc@spannj.org	bevfv@aol.com

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Inc.

Northern Region
Sh'corah Yehudah
c/o SPAN
35 Halsey Street, 4th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102
(973) 642-8100 x113
(973) 642-3766 fax
vpc@spannj.org

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HELPFUL TIPS TO PREVENT THE ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE

- When dealing with conflict, first identify the problem; then attack it, not the person.
- Know that you have options to choose from in resolving the problem, identify them.
- Find a resolution that all those involved agree upon and are comfortable with.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help.
- In managing anger, make sure to allow time for yourself.
- Do something you enjoy but haven't done in a long time.
- Breathe deeply & relax.
- Pray & meditate.
- Take a hot bath or read.
- Take a walk, exercise or dance.
- Sing, write, play an instrument, create.
- Consider your blessings.
- Volunteer your time to help someone else.
- Never shake a baby, it can cause serious injuries.
- Model the behavior you'd like to see in your child.
- Reward your child's respectful behavior with kind words, a gift or a family outing.
- Talk with your child about your personal experiences and how you overcame obstacles.
- Work on not yelling, insulting, cursing or calling your child names.
- Encourage your child's ambitions & talents.
- Involve your child in making a few family rules and the consequences for violating them.
- Converse with your child.
- Listen to your child.

SPAN Mission

To empower families and inform and involve professionals and other individuals interested in the healthy development and educational rights of children, to enable all children to become fully participating and contributing members of our communities and society.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network	800-654-7726 x113
Statewide Domestic Violence Hotline	800-572-SAFE (7233)
Alcohol Abuse Hotline	800-322-5525
Drug Abuse Hotline	800-225-0196
NJ AIDS Hotline	800-624-2377
Parents Anonymous	800-583-4135
Division of Youth & Family Services	800-792-8610
NJ Coalition for Battered Women	609-584-8107
Newark Emergency Assistance for Families, Inc. Hotline for Homeless Emergencies	800-696-7063
Division of Welfare Emergency Assistance for Domestic Violence Victims	973-733-4629
University Behavioral Health Care Counseling Program for Child Victims of Violence	800-969-5300 or 973-972-4818
American Friends Service Committee Legal Help for Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence	973-643-1924
Education Law Center	973-624-1815

Visit www.spannj.org today to learn more about SPAN services.

PARENT INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTERS
NJ PIRC

VIOLENCE PREVENTION INITIATIVE

www.spannj.org

Statewide
Parent
Advocacy
Network

Some Basics

Call your HMO 24-hour toll-free number if your child develops a need for **urgent care** (attention needed within 24 hours; but not an immediate emergency). Your PCP will provide or arrange for this care.

With Medicaid managed care, you will see providers in the HMO's **Provider Network**, with few exceptions. If there is no one in the HMO's network who can provide a covered service your child needs, you may get a referral outside the network. If you decide to see a non-network provider on your own, without a referral, you will have to pay that provider out of your own pocket.

Your child's Care Manager works with you and your child to develop (and modify as needs change) an **Individual Health Care Plan** to monitor all the services (even those provided outside the HMO) your child receives.

Medicaid beneficiaries with complex medical or mental health needs may be allowed to continue with their fee-for-service providers and not enroll in an HMO. This is called an **exemption**. Each exemption request is reviewed and, if denied, may be appealed through the **Medicaid Fair Hearing** process. Call the HBC to apply for an exemption.

Once you get used to Medicaid managed care, you may find that you experience easier access to Medicaid services and providers, and better coordination of services to meet your child's needs.

If you follow correct HMO procedures, you should never receive a bill. If you do, take it immediately to your care manager for resolution.

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Medicaid Managed Care Services

Benefits Package

Primary and Specialty Care
Preventive Health Care and Counseling
Health Promotion
EPSDT (Early & Periodic Screening, Diagnosis & Treatment)
Emergency Medical Care
Inpatient Hospital (acute, rehab, and specialty)
Outpatient Hospital
Laboratory
Radiology
Prescription Drugs
Family Planning Services and Supplies
Audiology
Inpatient Rehabilitation
Podiatrist
Chiropractor
Optometrist
Optical Appliances
Hearing Aid Services
Home Health (with limits)
Hospice
Durable Medical Equipment
Medical Supplies
Prosthetics and Orthotics (including shoe)
Dental
Organ Transplants
Transportation (some)
Post-acute Care
Mental Health/Substance Abuse

(This is for DDD clients only; non-DDD clients receive mental health services on a fee-for-service basis just as they did in the past. Read about "carve out" or excluded services in this pamphlet.)

See also your HMO member handbook

Call the
Health Benefits Coordinator (HBC)
with questions about HMO enrollment, transfers, and exemptions.
1-800-701-0710 *(translation services available)*
TTY: 1-800-701-0720

What's the Same About the New System?

You continue to receive your monthly Medicaid eligibility letter, though now you also have the HMO's identification (ID) card.

Your child is still eligible under Medicaid managed care for the services (**Benefits Package**) she has always received under the traditional Medicaid fee-for-service system. She receives HMO **excluded services** (also called "carve-out" services), such as physical, speech, and occupational therapies, and some transportation services on a fee-for-service basis outside your HMO plan.

Coordinate all services with your HMO Care Manager, and be sure they are part of your child's Individual Health Care Plan. *They will be paid for by Medicaid.*

Bring your current Medicaid eligibility letter with your HMO ID card to all visits.

Some Medicaid services are not provided by your HMO. Medicaid still pays for them.

Remember

- In an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. Check with your PCP the next day.
- Get a referral from your PCP before seeking any non-emergency services.
- Use only providers in your HMO's network provider directory.

What's New in the Medicaid Managed Care System?

You work with a state-contracted **Health Benefits Coordinator** (HBC) to identify and enroll in the best plan for your child among the 5 HMO choices.

Families of Medicaid-eligible children with special health care needs and/or disabilities must select for their child one of 5 HMOs that have contracted with the State of New Jersey to provide Medicaid Managed Care services. If they don't, their child will eventually be assigned to one of the HMOs.

Once your child is signed up with an HMO:
- You receive an **identification card**, a **member handbook**, and a **provider directory** from the HMO (and maybe a separate prescription card)
- You select a **Primary Care Provider** (PCP) from that plan's provider list. If you don't, the HMO assigns one to you.
- The HMO assigns a **Care Manager** (usually a nurse or social worker) to your child.

You *must* get a **referral** from your child's PCP for most non-emergency services (specialist visits, lab, hospital, equipment, therapies) before your child receives those services. Otherwise, the HMO can refuse to pay for the services. Some services must be pre-approved at the HMO, a process called **prior authorization**, which is initiated by your PCP.

You also choose a Primary Care Dentist (PCD). You don't need a referral from your PCP.

If you, as a **prudent layperson**, decide that your child has an **emergency medical condition**, the HMO pays for treatment of emergencies without need for a referral or pre-approval. Just call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. But *do not use the emergency room for any routine care*; it won't be paid for.

If you think your child has an emergency but aren't sure and can't reach your PCP, your child can be screened at the emergency room at no cost to you even if he isn't treated there.

Using Medicaid Managed Care

- Call the HBC to enroll in an HMO
- Read your HMO Member Handbook
- Select and work with your PCP
- Get referrals for other services
- Work with your Care Manager
- Use network providers
- Use emergency rooms only for emergencies

FAMILY VOICES
Speaking on behalf of children with special health care needs

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1-800-654-SPAN x110
www.spannj.org/family_voices.htm
email: familyvoices@spannj.org

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Fact Sheet 1

MEDICAID MANAGED CARE

FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN NEW JERSEY

WHAT'S COVERED? WHAT'S NOT?

What is Medicaid Managed Care?

Medicaid is a government program that provides free medical assistance for qualified beneficiaries. New Jersey's new Medicaid program, **New Jersey Care 2000+**, also known as "**Medicaid Managed Care**," requires most Medicaid-eligible children with special needs to receive their health care from managed care organizations.

Managed care is a comprehensive approach to providing and paying for high-quality health care services - from routine to emergency - within a coordinated system in a cost-effective manner. The health plans that provide the **Benefits Package** for the Medicaid managed care system in New Jersey are called **Health Maintenance Organizations** (HMOs).

*When we talk about Medicaid managed care, some unfamiliar words may come up. Use the "Important Terms" brochure that comes with your fact sheets to look up **highlighted** words. This will help you learn how to "speak the language" of managed care.*

Before Choosing an HMO, You May Want to Ask:

- Are the doctors I want for my child in the HMO? Ask your doctor, the HMO's member services, or the HBC.
- Is the hospital I use in the HMO provider network?
- Does the HMO provide services in convenient locations for me -- not just the PCP, but also pharmacy, laboratory, medical equipment, and specialists?
  1. If my child needs a specialty clinic for a particular disability (like spinal cord injury or cerebral palsy), is the specialty clinic in the HMO network?
  2. Or will the HMO be willing to refer my child outside the network to this clinic?
- Is a network pharmacy accessible to me? Is my current pharmacy in the HMO's network?
- What dental services are provided, and are they convenient/accessible to my child?
- Are my current durable medical equipment suppliers in the HMO's network? If not, how will we get DME we already own maintained through the HMO? (Ask to talk to a care manager.)
- Do 24-hour hotlines and member services have TDD or phone relay services?
- Are there providers who speak my language? What are the provisions for interpreters?
- What are the provisions for sign-language interpreters?
- Does the HMO have additional benefits that are particularly attractive for my child?

You may change HMOs if you have major problems. Call the HBC to process changes. It can take 45 days or more to make the switch.

How to Ask Questions

Before you start, read the materials you receive from Medicaid in the mail. They compare the different HMOs, as well as consumer satisfaction with the different HMOs.

Include your child - to the best of his or her ability - in the selection process. This can be a great opportunity to help your child learn some basic self-advocacy skills.

Get member handbooks from each HMO so that you can compare the HMOs in detail. The numbers to call are listed on the Family Voices Resource List. It can take many weeks and some follow-up calls to receive these handbooks, so start as soon as possible.

You can call member services at the different HMOs to ask questions. An HMO care manager or your county case manager may also be able to answer some of your questions.

Always keep a record of all phone calls and correspondence. Make copies of letters you send and keep them on file. Keep a "logbook" next to your telephone, and record the date, the name of the person you talked to, their responses to your questions.

Be persistent in seeking answers, and try to remain polite as you seek information. These tactics will serve you and your child well.

Health Benefits Coordinator (HBC)
1-800-701-0710
TTY: 1-800-701-0720

The HBC can also make home visits. Home visits are especially useful if your child has complex needs!

Before Choosing an PCP, You May Want to Ask:

- Does the provider have experience working with families of children with special health care needs?
- Has he/she worked with children with my child's disability or special needs before?
- Who will see my child when the PCP is not available?
- Is the provider's office located close to my home?
- Are the office and exam rooms easily accessible or are there barriers for my child and me?
- Does this provider speak my language or sign?

Once You've Chosen a Plan and a PCP

- Read your member handbook carefully. It will answer many of your questions.
- Identify important people and phone numbers to call, and keep these posted next to your phone.
  - member services
  - 24-hour hotline for questions
  - your PCP
  - your care manager
- Be sure you learn how to reach help after hours!
- Continue to keep records of all contacts with your PCP, care manager, and others so you can follow up effectively, or so you know the people you rely on are following up on your issues. If any problems come up, you can use these records as documentation of what you've done to try to resolve them.

You may change PCPs if you are not satisfied with your first selection. Talk to your HMO's member services, or call your care manager for information.

Helpful Approaches

- List all the people who provide services to your child. Consult with your current providers or the HBC to determine which HMO(s) Provider Networks they are in. Choose the HMO with the largest number of your current providers, or with the current provider(s) who are most important to you and your child.
- Ask questions about the different plans, and choose the plan that meets most of your requirements.
- Talk to family and friends, especially ones with similar health care needs, about their experiences with making choices in managed care.
- Keep records of who you speak with and when, and answers provided.

The Family Voices Resource List provides helpful contacts who can answer your questions.

Troubleshooting

HMOs are encouraged to invite your current providers to join their provider network if they not members. Ask member services at any HMO you are interested in about this possibility.

The family of a child with complex special health care needs who has an outstanding system of providers who do not belong to any of the Medicaid HMO networks may request an exemption to Medicaid Managed Care. Ask the HBC how to do this.

If you think your child has an emergency but aren't sure and can't reach your PCP, your child can be screened at the emergency room at no cost to you even if he isn't treated there.

Using Medicaid Managed Care

- Call the HBC to enroll in an HMO
- Read your HMO Member Handbook
- Select and work with your PCP
- Get referrals for other services
- Work with your Care Manager
- Use network providers
- Use emergency rooms only for emergencies

Provider Issues

- Distance from home
- Accessibility
- Language spoken or interpreter availability
- Sign language
- Office hours
- Access to specialty services
- Convenience of lab, pharmacy, equipment
- Transportation availability
- Member hospitals

FAMILY VOICES
Speaking on behalf of children with special health care needs

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Fact Sheet
2

MEDICAID MANAGED CARE
FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN NEW JERSEY

CHOOSING PROVIDERS

Two Levels of Choice

When you enter the Medicaid Managed Care system in New Jersey, you will need to make two important decisions:

1. Which of the 5 Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) plans offered under Medicaid Managed Care is the best one for your child?
2. In the HMO you choose, who is the best Primary Care Provider (PCP) for your child?

New Jersey Care 2000+, the state Medicaid Managed Care Program, will mail you information about each HMO to help you choose among them or you can request this information. Read these booklets carefully.

A good resource for questions about enrollment is the Health Benefits Coordinator (HBC). The HBC also processes HMO enrollment and transfers, and can help you request an exemption to Medicaid managed care. Call 1-800-701-0710.

*When we talk about Medicaid managed care, some unfamiliar words may come up. Use the "Important Terms" brochure that comes with your fact sheets to look up **highlighted** words. This will help you learn how to "speak the language" of managed care.*

Your PCP

Work with your PCP to meet your child's basic health needs. Your PCP coordinates all medical care, including routine physicals, preventive health services, referrals and standing referrals to specialists, and hospital visits. He or she takes care of prior authorization for some services with the HMO, and can help you with appeals or preparing for Medicaid Fair Hearings when your HMO denies or limits services. Be sure to keep your PCP informed of contacts you have with other health care providers, and always contact your PCP within 24 hours when your child has had an emergency room visit.

Your Care Manager

Work with your child's care manager to coordinate all your child's services and needs. The care manager will help you and your child establish goals, develop a comprehensive and personalized Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) to meet your child's needs, help with referrals or special transportation needs your child may have, and coordinate medical care with other services. Although your care manager should call you shortly after you sign up with your HMO, you don't need to wait for the call. Call HMO member services and tell them you want to speak with your care manager. That way, you can get a basic plan started before any needs arise.

State regulations require that care managers' education and experience with people with special health care needs increase with the complexity of client needs, so your child's care manager will probably be one of your best resources for information and troubleshooting.

Read your member handbook to understand how and where to get meds.

Pharmacy

Fill your prescriptions only at participating provider pharmacies. Your child is entitled to medically-necessary medications at no cost. If you are asked to pay, or if your child's medications are not in your HMO's formulary, see your care manager to resolve the problems.

If you have a problem with a provider, see your care manager, your PCP, or the
Health Benefits Coordinator
1-800-701-0710 toll-free

If you have a problem with your care manager or your PCP, call
Your HMO's member services

If your HMO does not meet your child's needs, call
Medicaid Managed Care Hotline
1-800-356-1561
Managed Health Care Consumer Assistance Program (MHCCAP)
1-888-838-3180 toll-free

Advocacy

An advocate is someone who pleads the cause of another, or champions another person's needs. Building good provider relations is an important way you advocate for your child.

Because you know your child's and your family's needs better than anyone, you may be the best advocate for your child. You can also encourage your child to advocate for himself. One way he can learn advocacy skills is by observing you, but also provide opportunities for him to speak for and advocate for himself with providers to whatever extent he can.

When you advocate effectively for your own child's needs, you may end up changing a whole system to better meet other children's and families' special needs.

When you advocate effectively for all children with special needs, you may end up making systems work better for your child and family.

To Be a Better Advocate

- Gather information. Ask questions.
- Know your rights.
- Keep organized records.
- Trust that you may see things professionals can't, since you're with your child most of the time.
- Be open to learning new things from providers.
- Enlist allies. One powerful way to advocate for your child is to seek support from other people:
  - Other families of children with special needs can share their experiences and what they have found helpful. See the Family Voices Resource List.
  - Your PCP, specialist physician, and your care manager can advocate with you or for you (on your request) with your HMO to meet your child's needs.
  - An attorney or other advocate will go with you for any kind of formal hearing. Check the Family Voices Resource List to locate support or free legal services.
- Find opportunities to help change systems:
  - Volunteer to join or serve as a consultant to your HMO consumer advisory board
  - Offer to participate in State agency consumer advisory groups working to develop and improve policies and regulations that benefit people with special needs in Medicaid managed care. Some NJ State agencies are listed on the Family Voices Resource List.
  - Write or phone your local, state or national officials and ask them to support laws and regulations that safeguard Medicaid for children with special needs and their families. When the officials do, call or mail them with a "thank you."

Being an advocate for your child means doing what is necessary to make sure your child gets what he or she needs, and that your family gets what it needs to care for your child.

Establishing a Relationship

You should expect high quality of care and responsibility from your providers, and they should be able to expect responsibility from you, as well.

It helps your providers when you:
- give them all the information they need in order to give your child the best care;
- ask questions when you do not understand;
- honestly express your concerns; and
- give them the same respect you expect from them.

When you establish open relationships with your PCP, care manager, and specialists, you lay a foundation for negotiating with them and eventually building strong working partnerships and mutual trust.

Your HMO "Rights and Responsibilities" tells you what to expect from your providers and what they're expecting from you. See your handbook.

Keeping Track of Facts

Some people learn better if they take notes. If you are one of these people, be sure to have a pencil and paper with you when you visit or talk with your child's providers. It may also help to have another adult with you during any stressful meeting with a provider so that this person can later help you clarify what was said at the meeting.

Keep a record book in which you note all phone contacts with any of your providers: who you talked to, the date, the answers you received, the resolution of your problem (if any), and when you can expect a call-back or need to call back.

Keep a file of all written communications with your providers or HMO and copies of any letters you send to them. This kind of record-keeping can be helpful if misunderstandings arise.

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Thank your providers when you like what they do; too often they only hear from dissatisfied clients.

Keep your child's provider phone numbers near your phone, along with her insurance card, history, medications list, and any other information you may need when you make calls.

When you call your provider with urgent needs, be specific about symptoms such as fever, how long your child has been sick, whether others in household are sick, etc.

Use resources wisely: for example, call the HMO's after-hours hotline only with urgent, not routine, questions.

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Speaking on behalf of children with special health care needs

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1-800-654-SPAN x110
www.spannj.org/family_voices.htm
email: familyvoices@spannj.org

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Fact Sheet 3

Medicaid Managed Care
for Children with Special Needs in New Jersey

PROVIDER RELATIONS and ADVOCACY

Providers

A provider is any professional your child receives medical or other services from, such as Primary Care Providers (PCPs), Care Managers, Primary Care Dentists, other doctors and nurses, social workers, therapists (PT, OT, speech), and other types of health workers. HMOs, hospitals, and other care facilities are also service providers.

To get the best Medicaid managed care services for your child through your Health Maintenance Organization (HMO), it helps to establish good working relationships with your most central providers, your PCP and your Care Manager.

Good provider relationships (like any good relationships) require time, effort, and patience on both sides; building these relationships can pay off for you and your child as you negotiate your way through Medicaid managed care. Medicaid managed care providers who are committed to your child and family can relieve some of the burden of coordinating all the services your child needs.

When we talk about Medicaid managed care, some unfamiliar words may come up. Use the "Important Terms" brochure that comes with your fact sheets to look up ***highlighted*** *words. This will help you learn how to "speak the language" of managed care.*

Appeals

Your HMO must notify you in writing at least 10 days before it denies or limits covered services to your child. If this happens to you and you disagree with the decision, you may file an appeal of the denial with your HMO. An appeal can sometimes be resolved easily, but the process can become very complicated, so you will probably want advice. Your PCP or care manager may be able help you, or consult the Family Voices Resource List. Again, read your member handbook carefully; you may find all the answers you need right there!

At the end of each stage of the process, if your HMO continues its denial, by law it must inform you in writing of its reasons for denial, and tell you how to proceed to the next stage. Always follow the instructions provided. The HMO also must respond to you at every level within a specified time (see your member handbook or call the Medicaid hotline). The HMO must also inform you that you have the right to request a Medicaid Fair Hearing at any time during the appeals process.

Internal Appeals

You can appeal at two levels within the HMO - the first with the medical director or the physician who denied coverage; the second with physicians who were not involved in the first appeal and who might typically care for children with needs similar to your child's.

During appeals to your HMO and the state Medicaid office, you may also request a Medicaid Fair Hearing.

External Appeals

If the HMO's responses to your appeals are unsatisfactory to you, apply to the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services to refer your appeal to an Independent Utilization Review Organization (IURO) (cost $2). The IURO reviews your appeal, and if it accepts your case, issues a decision to you and/or your PCP, and to your HMO. *If the IURO decides in your favor, the HMO must promptly provide coverage.*

Helpful Pointers

- Know the definition of medical necessity. It is commonly the basis of service denials or limitations.
- Know your responsibilities as well as your rights. You are accountable for upholding them.
- Keep a record of every personal or phone contact with dates, names, phone numbers, outcomes, when to expect a call-back, etc.
- Keep copies of all written contacts, including letters you send or receive from your HMO (your HMO will also be documenting every contact you have with it)
- Mail all correspondence by certified mail with return receipt requested
- Bring legal representation to any fair hearing proceeding
- Read and understand your member handbook; ask questions if you don't understand
- Don't hesitate to ask for advice about complaint, grievance, or appeal processes. They're complicated!
- Every year your HMO will provide you with the most up-to-date information about the grievance process - be sure to stay current on the information.

Medicaid Managed Care Hotline
1-800-356-1561

Managed Health Care Consumer Assistance Program
1-888-838-3180

Legal Services of New Jersey
1-888-LSNJ-LAW

Medicaid Fair Hearing

At any time in the appeals process (but within 90 days of the denial) you can file for a fair hearing with the state Department of Human Services (call the Medicaid hotline). When your HMO denies, reduces, or delays a service, it must also explain in writing your right to a fair hearing and how to obtain one.

At a fair hearing, an impartial judge listens to your position. You can also bring your own witnesses and cross-examine any witnesses the HMO brings. It's a good idea to have legal representation at the Fair Hearing. The Family Voices Resource List identifies free resources for legal assistance.

Ask for an immediate review in any urgent situation. Write "Emergency Decision Required" on all envelopes and letters, and tell anyone you speak to that you require an emergency decision.

OF COURSE, IF YOUR CHILD REQUIRES EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE, CALL 9-1-1 OR GO TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM!

Complaints

You may occasionally encounter problems with your HMO about issues like difficulty scheduling appointments, physical or communication barriers, use of the HMO's 24-hour phone service or member services, a disagreement with a care provider, or an inappropriate bill for a covered service.

Try to resolve the problem where and when it originates. Most problems can be resolved by talking directly to your PCP, care manager, or other provider about them. You might also start with your PCP or care manager if you have any concerns about other processes or people in the HMO; your concerns may be simple to address. You can also call the Medicaid hotline or the Managed Care Consumer Assistance Program (MHCCAP) helpline for advice on how to proceed.

If your complaint is about urgent care, you or your PCP should request an urgent grievance decision. The HMO must then resolve your grievance within 48 hours.

If this doesn't resolve the problem to your satisfaction, call your HMO member services and file a complaint. Be specific about why you are dissatisfied. If the HMO can't resolve the problem within 24 hours, you may register a grievance with the HMO by phone or letter within 60 days of the incident that caused the problem (it's good to file it in writing because then the state Medicaid office automatically gets a copy).

If you are not satisfied with the HMO's solution to your complaint, you can also call the state Medicaid Hotline at 1-800-356-1561 or the MHCCAP Helpline at 1-888-838-3180.

You have the right to make complaints, grievances and appeals in your primary language and have them handled in that language.

Where to Turn for Help with Dispute Resolution

Your PCP

Your care manager

State Medicaid Hotline
800-356-1561

NJ Managed Health Care
Consumer Assistance Program
888-838-3180

Legal Services of New Jersey
1-888-LSNJ-LAW

Advocacy organizations

Community social services

Family Voices Resource List

Your HMO Member Services

Americhoice	800-941-4647
Amerigroup	800-600-4441
Horizon/Mercy	800-NJMERCY
Health Net	800-555-2604
University HP	800-564-6847

or check your member handbook
for multilingual or TDD numbers

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Fact Sheet
4

Medicaid Managed Care
for Children with Special Needs in New Jersey

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Your **Health Maintenance Organization's** (HMO) **member handbook** is a good resource for complete information about your rights under **Medicaid Managed Care**, and about the processes you may follow - both inside your HMO and outside your HMO - to resolve your problems or deal with denial of services. Each HMO's handbook has a section on Complaint, Grievance and Appeal Procedures. This section includes steps you can take, with whom you can take them, and how you can contact appropriate resources. Be sure you read carefully and understand the rights and responsibilities section of your handbook, too!

If there is anything you do not understand, clarify it with your **Primary Care Physician** (PCP), your **care manager**, or your HMO's **member services**. Your HMO's orientation or welcome session in your community is also a great opportunity to seek answers to your questions.

You can file a complaint, grievance or appeal, or your PCP or another representative can do it for you, with your permission. You, your PCP, or representative may also call the state Medicaid hotline for help at 1-800-356-1561.

When we talk about Medicaid managed care, some unfamiliar words may come up. Use the "Important Terms" brochure that comes with your fact sheets to look up ***highlighted*** *words. This will help you learn how to "speak the language" of managed care.*

How Might my Child Lose Welfare or SSI Eligibility?

Welfare

If your family income or resources change, or if you reach the 5-year time limit on your welfare benefit, your family can become ineligible for NJWF/TANF.

SSI

A Disability Determination Services Team made up of a trained disability examiner and a physician or psychologist determines SSI eligibility. To be eligible, your child must have a physical or mental condition(s) that can be medically proven and which results in marked or severe functional limitations; and the condition(s) must have lasted or be expected to last at least 12 months or end in death.

If your child has a disability which has a chance of improvement, eligibility will be reviewed once every 3 years to see if her condition has improved; or if your baby receives SSI because of low birth weight, eligibility will be reviewed no later than her first birthday. At either of these times, it may be determined that her condition has improved enough that she no longer qualifies for SSI.

Another way SSI eligibility could be lost is through an increase in family income or resources.

Anytime your child is determined to no longer be eligible for SSI, you will be notified of the decision in writing and have the right to appeal within 60 days of your receipt of the notice. You may request that your child's SSI payments continue during the appeal within 10 days of your receipt of the notice, but if your child is still found ineligible for SSI, the continued benefits will be considered an overpayment that you will be required to pay back.

Remember: Eligibility for Medicaid is not automatically lost if your family or child is no longer eligible for SSI or welfare!

Resources for Information about
Welfare, SSI & Medicaid:
State Medicaid Hotline
1-800-356-1561 toll free
Your Local County Welfare Agency
(check your phone book's blue pages)

Legal Services of New Jersey
1-888-576-5529 toll free

Managed Health Care Consumer Assistance Program
1-888-838-3180 toll free

For other questions about Medicaid and children with special health care needs in New Jersey, see the
Family Voices Resource List
or the
Family Voices Fact Sheets on **Medicaid Managed Care**

What Can I Do if I Have a Problem with Loss Of Benefits?

First contact your county welfare agency to ask what you can do. If county welfare cannot help you, you can contact either of the following resources:

Legal Services of New Jersey at their statewide Legal Hotline, 1-888-LSNJ-LAW (1-888-576-5529) or the local Legal Services program in your county. Services are provided at no charge, but you must be financially eligible to qualify and representation is not guaranteed. If you are hearing impaired or unable to contact them during business hours, you may e-mail your inquiry to legalhelp@lsnj.org. Website: www.lsnj.org

The Community Health Law Project, a non-profit legal aid society dedicated to serving the legal needs of persons with disabilities and the elderly throughout New Jersey. Through negotiation, litigation and advocacy, the CHLP removes discrimination, protects rights, and preserves independence and quality of life. Staff members are based in four regional offices and an administrative unit, and include attorneys and social service advocates who are experts in public entitlements like Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Benefits, Welfare, Emergency Assistance, Medicaid, Medicare, and other Health Insurance. Phone: (973) 275-1175. Fax: (973) 275-5210

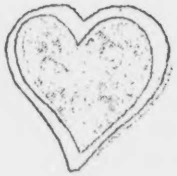
Welfare, SSI, and Medicaid in New Jersey

New Jersey's welfare program for families is known as **Work First New Jersey / Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (WFNJ/TANF)**. The county welfare agency in each county administers the WFNJ/TANF program.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a program administered by the federal Social Security Administration (SSA), under which people with limited income and resources who are blind or disabled (and persons 65 or older) receive maintenance payments from SSA and supportive services through the Board of Social Services in each county. In New Jersey, a state supplement provides additional funds to persons eligible for SSI.

Medicaid is a government program that provides free medical assistance for qualified beneficiaries. New Jersey's Medicaid program is called New Jersey Care 2000+, or Medicaid Managed Care. In New Jersey, most children eligible for SSI are automatically eligible for and will be enrolled in Medicaid.

Most families enrolled in WFNJ/TANF who have dependent children are also automatically eligible for Medicaid, even though TANF and Medicaid are different programs. When you apply for WFNJ/TANF, your caseworker will also determine your family's Medicaid eligibility. As your income or resources change, your Medicaid eligibility may too.



If your family loses eligibility for welfare, also known as Work First New Jersey / Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (WFNJ/TANF), you or your child with special needs may still be eligible for Medicaid.

If your child with special needs loses eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), he may still be eligible for Medicaid.

FAMILY VOICES
Speaking on behalf of children with special health care needs

Family Voices of New Jersey

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Inc.
1-800-654-SPAN x110
www.spannj.org/family_voices.htm
email: familyvoices@spannj.org

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Fact Sheet 5

MEDICAID MANAGED CARE
FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN NEW JERSEY

WELFARE, SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME, and MEDICAID

Parents of children with special needs who receive welfare support or whose children receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) often are concerned about what will happen to their Medicaid health insurance if their children become ineligible for SSI or welfare.

In 1997, federal welfare and SSI regulations changed due to passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act (PRWORA).

This meant that standards for eligibility for these programs became stricter, and some people who had formerly qualified for them no longer were eligible.

If your family has lost eligibility for welfare or your child has lost eligibility for SSI, this does not necessarily mean that your child has lost eligibility for Medicaid.

When we talk about Medicaid managed care, some unfamiliar words may come up. Use the "Important Terms" brochure that comes with your fact sheets to look up ***highlighted words****. This will help you learn how to "speak the language" of managed care.*

General

Benefits package (= "covered services"): Medicaid services which state-contracted HMOs are responsible to provide. Include:

- Primary & Specialty Care
- Preventive Health Care & Counseling, Health Promotion
- Early & Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, & Treatment (EPSDT)
- Emergency Medical Care
- Inpatient Hospital (acute, rehab, & specialty)
- Outpatient Hospital
- Laboratory
- Radiology
- Prescription Drugs
- Family Planning Services & Supplies (in or out of HMO plan)
- Audiology
- Inpatient Rehabilitation
- Podiatrist
- Chiropractor
- Optometrist
- Optical Appliances
- Hearing Aid Services
- Home Health (limited)
- Hospice
- Durable Medical Equipment
- Medical Supplies
- Prosthetics & Orthotics (including shoe)
- Dental Organ Transplants
- Transportation (some)
- Post-acute Care
- Mental Health/Substance Abuse (generally, Division of Developmental Disabilities - DDD - clients only)
- Other services, such as mental health and substance abuse for non-DDD clients, physical, occupational, and speech therapies, some transportation, intermediate care facilities for children with developmental disabilities, medical day care, and nursing home care continue to be covered by Medicaid, but under the fee for service payment system, not under the managed care program. (See also "fee-for-service" under "Payment" section, and "carve-out services" under "Services" section.)

Care Management: steps to assure that an enrollee receives needed services in a timely manner. Emphasizes prevention, continuity of care, and coordination of care. Advocates for and links enrollees to services across providers and settings.

Health Maintenance Organization: type of managed health care organization that provides coverage of services for enrollees from a specific network of providers in a geographical area for a prepaid, fixed premium.

Identification card: a card issued by the HMO to identify enrollees; different from the Medicaid card. Both should be presented at time of service.

Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP): plan of care for HMO enrollees with special needs who qualify for a higher level of care management based on a Complex Needs Assessment." IHCPs specify goals, needed medical services and relevant support services, specialized transportation & communication, appropriate outcomes, barriers to effective outcomes, and timelines. IHCP is developed by the Care Manager with enrollee and Primary Care Physician (PCP) input; is updated as needs arise or change.

Managed Care: a comprehensive system of health care delivery and financing which coordinates and provides timely access to high-quality, medically-necessary health care services for its members in a cost-effective manner.

Medicaid: a joint Federal-State program (Title XIX of the Social Security Act) which pays for health care services for low income families with dependent children, senior citizens, and people with disabilities, as well as some people who are medically needy because their health expenses are high. The Federal government regulates and oversees Medicaid, and the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services administers Medicaid in the state.

Medicaid Managed Care: the delivery of services to Medicaid-eligible individuals by means of a managed care system.

Member handbook: the HMO booklet each new enrollee receives, with facts about how the HMO works, how to solve problems, and what the member's rights and responsibilities are regarding the HMO.

Member services: HMO department you can contact with questions, problems, and/or complaints. Toll-free, open Monday to Friday during working hours. HMOs also have toll-free 24-hour hotline numbers to handle urgent calls or emergencies.

New Jersey Care 2000+: the name of the Medicaid managed care program in New Jersey, which is administered by the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services of the Department of Human Services.

Provider Network: all the doctors, hospitals and other providers an HMO contracts with to provide services to its enrollees. In order for services to be fully covered by the HMO, enrollees are usually limited to receiving services from its provider network. The HMO gives a Provider Directory to each new enrollee.

Service area: geographic region an HMO serves.

Benefits Limits

Excluded services (also called "carve-out" services): see under "Services"

Formulary List (or Formulary): an approved list of prescription medications and their uses that each HMO develops. Each HMO has its own formulary. Only drugs appearing in the individual HMO's formulary will be paid for by the HMO. If an enrollee's medication is not in the formulary, the PCP may be able to prescribe an equally effective medication that is in the formulary. In order for the HMO to pay for a non-formulary medication, the PCP must certify the medical necessity of the medication and the HMO must approve the PCP's request to go outside the formulary. (Some prescription medications are paid for by Medicaid on fee-for-service basis outside the HMO, including: clozapine, respiridone, olanzapine, ziprasidone, quetiapine, and methadone. The HMO review procedure is not necessary for these medications.)

Prior Authorization (= "preauthorization" or "preapproval"): HMO medical or dental review process that gives a provider permission to proceed with a course of treatment. Some services will be paid for only with prior authorization from the HMO.

Referral: approval for an enrollee to receive services from a specialist or other health care services. The PCP commonly provides the referral. Without a referral, the HMO may refuse to pay for the services.

Standing Referral: your PCP can issue a referral for a number of visits to frequently-seen specialists or other providers.

Services

Diagnostic Services: medical procedures to identify illness, injury, or other health condition(s) of an enrollee.

Durable medical equipment: equipment, including assistive technology, which can be used repeatedly, is used to service a health or functional purpose, is ordered by a qualified practitioner, and is appropriate for home, school, or community use.

EPSDT (Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment): program that covers screening & diagnostic services to determine physical and mental conditions in children under 21; and treatment to correct or reduce the effects of conditions found. (Under federally-mandated regulations found in Title XIX of the Social Security Act).

Excluded services: services not provided by the HMO but covered under Medicaid fee-for-service program. Also called "Carve-Out services," or "carve outs," they include:

- mental health services, unless beneficiary is a non-institutionalized client of NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD);
- certain prescription medications;
- personal care assistant services;
- therapies, including physical, occupational, and speech; and
- some blood factors.

Medically-necessary services: services consistent with the enrollee's diagnosis, meet accepted standards of good medical practice, and can be safely provided. HMO clinicians may review a provider's proposed course of treatment to determine medical necessity. In addition for children, medically-necessary includes an additional requirement that the services are appropriate for the age & health status of the child, that the service will aid overall physical and mental growth and development and/or the service will assist in achieving or maintaining functional capacity.

Out-of-area services: services covered under the benefits package included in the Medicaid contract which are provided to enrollees outside of the defined service area.

Children with Special Health Care Needs

Children with special health care needs: children who have or are at increased risk for chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional conditions and who also require health and related services of a type and amount beyond that required for children generally.

Disability in children: physical or mental impairment(s) in persons under age 18 resulting in marked and severe functional limitations that limit the child's ability to function independently, appropriately and effectively in an age-appropriate manner, and which can be expected to result in death or can be expected to last 12 months or longer.

"People"

Authorized person: the person who makes enrollment and other health-care decisions for the beneficiary. May be the beneficiary, parent or guardian, or someone with power of attorney to make those decisions for the beneficiary.

Beneficiary: person eligible to receive services in the NJ Medicaid program. Eligibility for Medicaid determined by County Welfare Agency (CWA) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Care Manager: registered nurse or social worker employed by or under contract to the HMO who is responsible for collaborating with enrollees with complex needs to develop and monitor Individual Health Care Plan. Care Managers help coordinate all needed services, including those received outside the HMO, such as PT, OT, Speech Therapy, and transportation.

Enrollee (or member): person enrolled in any of the NJ Medicaid managed care HMOs.

Health Benefits Coordinator (HBC): Individual who can provide information and assistance to persons eligible for Medicaid managed care on how to choose, enroll in, transfer from, or problem-solve an HMO plan. Enrollment in the Medicaid managed care HMO is through the HBC. The HBC can make home visits. Employed by the organization under contract to the State to provide these services (called Maximus); not employed by the HMO.

Non-participating provider (or non-network provider): a service provider that does not have a contract with the HMO. Prior authorization from the HMO must be obtained in order for the HMO to pay for services of a non-participating provider.

Participating provider: provider that has a contract with the HMO to provide services.

Primary Care Provider (PCP): health care professional responsible under managed care for providing basic medical care, referrals to specialty providers, and continuity of patient care. Sometimes referred to as a "gate-keeper." PCPs may be MDs in family practice or pediatrics, or doctors of osteopathy (DO), or certain other licensed medical practitioners such as Certified Nurse Practitioners (CNP), Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS), or Physicians Assistants (PA). A specialist may serve as a PCP. The practitioner must be able and willing to carry out all PCP responsibilities in accordance with the contract.

Provider: any physician, hospital, facility, or other health care professional who is licensed or authorized to provide health care services in the state.

Specialist: provider who concentrates on a particular health condition or age group. Under managed care, specialist care requires referral from the PCP.

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Levels of Care

Routine Care: treatment of a condition that would not worsen if not treated within 24 hours or could be treated in a less urgent setting such as a doctor's office or by the patient.

Urgent Care: treatment of a condition that is not life-threatening, but which the PCP decides requires treatment within 24 hours to prevent deterioration. Call the PCP or the HMO's 24-hour phone line to arrange for urgent care.
- *Do not use the emergency room for routine or even urgent care: it will not be paid for.*

Emergency Care: covered inpatient and outpatient services furnished by any qualified provider that are necessary to evaluate or stabilize an emergency medical condition

Emergency Medical Condition: a medical condition with symptoms of such severity (including pain) that a prudent layperson could reasonably expect it to threaten life or to significantly impair health

Prudent Layperson: any person without medical training who possesses an average knowledge of medicine and health
- *Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room for an emergency medical condition.*

Problem Resolution

Appeal: a formal telephone or written request to a health plan to change a decision based on medical necessity

Complaint: protest by an enrollee about the conduct of the HMO, or an act or failure to act by the HMO, or any other matter in which an enrollee feels aggrieved by the HMO, that is communicated to the HMO and could be resolved by the HMO within the day (24 hours) of receipt.

Complaint or Grievance Procedure: process within the HMO for consumers or providers to use to deal with disagreements about services, procedures, or billing.

Contested Claim: claim that is denied because it is ineligible, information is incomplete or incorrect, the amount claimed is in dispute, or the claim requires special treatment.

Explanation: medical reason for a negative decision (and the HMO policy language that allows the decision)

Fair Hearing: the process by which Medicaid beneficiaries use their legal right to appeal negative decisions from their HMO in front of an administrative law judge.

Grievance: any complaint submitted in writing or orally which could not be resolved within the same day (24 hours) of receipt

Independent Utilization Review Organization (IURO): the independent body to whom the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Office of Managed Care, refers appeals that could not be resolved within the HMO process. The IURO has no ties to the HMO.

Enrollment & Assignment

Enrollment: process by which a Medicaid-eligible individual applies to use an HMO instead of standard Medicaid benefits, and their application is approved

Mandatory enrollment: a Medicaid-eligible person is required to enroll in an HMO, unless otherwise exempted, to receive services in the benefits package.

Voluntary enrollment: process by which a Medicaid-eligible person voluntarily enrolls in an HMO

Exceptions: Medicaid/Medicare dually eligible individuals may enroll in Medicaid managed care, but for the time being are not required to do so.

Exemptions: some Medicaid beneficiaries with complex medical or mental health needs who have providers who are not in any Medicaid HMO network may be allowed to continue to receive services from them (i.e., will not have to enroll in Medicaid managed care). Exemptions must be applied for through the HBC. Each request for exemption is reviewed, and if denied, may be appealed through Medicaid Fair Hearing Process.

Enrollment Period: time when you decide which HMO you will choose

Disenrollment: removal of an enrollee from participation in a particular HMO, but not from Medicaid

Automatic Assignment or "Auto-Assignment": process whereby the State assigns Medicaid beneficiaries to an HMO when the beneficiaries fail to choose their own

PCP Assignment: process whereby Medicaid beneficiaries enrolled in a Medicaid HMO receive a Primary Care Provider (PCP) when they do not choose their own

Transfer: an enrollee's change from enrollment in one HMO to a different HMO

Payment

Fee-For-Service (FFS): the traditional method of payment under which providers bill Medicaid directly for services. Most Medicaid managed care HMO enrollees still obtain some services outside the HMO billed on a fee-for-service basis (physical, occupational, and speech therapies, and some home health care; mental health/substance abuse services for people who are not clients of the New Jersey Department of Developmental Disabilities).

- *Medicaid recipients who follow the correct procedures for their HMOs should never receive a bill. If they do, they should immediately take it to their care manager for resolution.*

These materials were designed to
introduce families of children with
special health care needs
and/or disabilities to
New Jersey Care 2000+, the
state Medicaid managed care program.

Production was funded
under a grant from the
Center for Health Care Strategies
to Family Voices of New Jersey at the
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
of New Jersey, Inc.

FAMILY VOICES
Speaking on behalf of children with special health care needs

Family Voices of New Jersey

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Inc.
1-800-654-SPAN x 110
www.spannj.org/family_voices.htm
email: familyvoices@spannj.org

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MEDICAID MANAGED CARE
FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN NEW JERSEY

IMPORTANT TERMS

Topic Areas

Find your term alphabetically in the area most applicable:

- General
- Benefits Limits/Restrictions
- Services
- Children with Special Health Care Needs or Disability
- People
- Levels of Care
- Problem Resolution
- Enrollment/Assignment
- Payment

Medicaid Managed Care Troubleshooting

Your HMO Care Manager

Your first-line troubleshooting resource; start here.
Then if you need more help with your questions
or problems, try the next three resources.
Get phone number from your HMO member services

Division of Medical Assistance & Health Services, New Jersey Department of Human Services (Medicaid)

Booklet: "Your Guide for Making
Medicaid Managed Care Work for You"
Medicaid managed care telephone hotline:
1-800-356-1561 toll free
www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dmahs

Managed Health Care Consumer Assistance Program (MHCCAP)

A joint program of New Jersey Protection & Advocacy, Inc.,
and the Community Health Law Project, sponsored by the
Department of Health and Senior Services
Helps consumers navigate managed care system;
provides information/education about consumer rights
under managed care; helps file complaints regarding
any aspect of the managed care organization's health care
services; helps consumers file appeals when a covered
benefit or service has been denied, limited, or terminated
1-888-838-3180 toll free
www.managedcarehelpline.org

The Health Benefits Coordinator, New Jersey Care 2000+ (Medicaid).

Service provided under a state contract with Maximus;
enrolls Medicaid beneficiaries in a managed care plan
(HMO); brochures "How to Join an HMO" and others;
answers questions about Medicaid managed care
and HMO choice, enrollment, and transfers
1-800-701-0710 toll free (translation services available)
TTY: 800-701-0720

Medicaid Managed Care Resources

The Arc of New Jersey

A statewide parent and consumer advocacy organization for
persons with developmental disabilities
Booklet: "How to Select an HMO: Individuals with
Developmental Disabilities and the Medicaid Managed Care
Program in New Jersey";
Newsletter: "Healthy Times"
Website: periodic Medicaid Update
1-732-246-2525 x28
fax: 1-732-214-1834
www.arcnj.org
find your local chapter in phone book

The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities

at University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey
Part of a federally-sponsored national network of university
centers of excellence in Developmental Disabilities
Education, Research, and Service.
"The Managed Health Care Curriculum: Supporting People
with Disabilities to Utilize Managed Health Care"
($85 list price)
Training, technical assistance, consultation,
program development and research in a variety of areas
relevant to persons with developmental disabilities.
Comprehensive on-line resource links page.
1-732-235-9300
TDD: 1-732-235-9328
http://rwjms.umdnj.edu/boggscenter
or for booklets and products:
http://rwjms.umdnj.edu/boggscenter/products/booklets.htm

Community Health Law Project

A statewide non-profit legal aid society dedicated to
providing legal and advocacy services to
persons with disabilities and senior citizens
Publication: "To Your Health: Your Consumer Rights
in Managed Health Care"
Access to general information
Access to legal counsel
1-973-275-1175
www.chlp.org

Division of Disability Services

NJ Department of Human Services
"New Jersey Resources 2001," guide to statewide services
and disability advocacy; more updated info by phone
1-888-285-3036 (toll free)
www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dds/resources/RDcontents.htm

Family Voices of New Jersey

(see Family Voices National below)
Fact sheets about Medicaid Managed Care
(NJ Care 2000+)
1-800-654-7726 x110
email: familyvoices@spannj.org
www.spannj.org/family_voices.htm

Family Voices National

A grassroots organization of families, caregivers, professionals and friends of children with special health needs
Pamphlet "Introduction to Managed Care for
Children with Special Health Care Needs;"
On-line Fact Sheets for families of children
with special health care needs
1-888-835-5669 (toll-free)
e-mail: kidshealth@familyvoices.org
www.familyvoices.org

Legal Services of New Jersey

an independent, non-profit organization that
coordinates the statewide Legal Services system
LSNJ strives to ensure equal access to justice under law
to all people of New Jersey, providing free legal assistance
to qualifying low-income people in civil matters.
1-888-LSNJ-LAW (1-888-576-5529)
e-mail: legalhelp@lsnj.org
www.lsnj.org

New Jersey Protection and Advocacy, Inc.

New Jersey's federally-funded designated protection
and advocacy system for state residents with disabilities
technical assistance and training; legal and non-legal
advocacy; outreach and education
1-800-922-7233 (toll-free); 1-609-292-9742
Fax: 609-777-0187
TDD: 609-633-7106
www.njpanda.org

Special Child, Adult & Early Intervention Services

Department of Health and Senior Services
With individual county boards, funds case management
units in each of NJ's 21 counties to promote
family-centered, community-based care and coordinate
service delivery for children with special needs.
Publication "Finding Your Way Through Medicaid
Managed Care for New Jersey Families of Children
with Special Health Care Needs" at
www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/finding/index.html
County-based case managers can help with
managed health care issues and problems.
1-888-393-1062 toll free; 609-777-7778
www.state.nj.us/health
Find your county office phone number in the
blue pages of your phone book, listed in the
County section under Social Services.

New Jersey's Medicaid HMOs

Americhoice member services
1-800-941-4647; TDD 1-800-852-7897
1-800-943-4647 (Spanish)

Amerigroup New Jersey, Inc. member services
1-800-600-4441; TDD 1-877-566-CARE

Horizon/Mercy member services
1-800-NJ-MERCY; TDD 1-800-684-5505

Health Net member services
1-800-555-2604; TDD 1-888-747-2424

University Health Plans, Inc. member services
1-800-564-6847; TDD 1-800-414-7592

Additional General Resources for Families of Children with Special Needs

Exceptional Parent
Resource guide for information on specific disabilities
1-800-eparent
www.eparent.com

Family Support Center
Information clearinghouse for national, state, and local family support programs, services & disabilities
1-800-FSC-NJ10; 732-262-8020
www.efnj.com/programs/familysupportcenter.shtml

Parent-to-Parent
Statewide network that coordinates opportunities for mutual support among parents of children with special needs
1-800-FSC-NJ10
parent2parent@spannj.org

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Inc. (SPAN)
Statewide center that informs and empowers families, professionals, & others interested in promoting the healthy development and education of all children
1-800-654-SPAN
www.spannj.org

These materials were designed to introduce families of children with special health care needs and/or disabilities to New Jersey Care 2000+, the state Medicaid managed care program.

Production was funded under a grant from the Center for Health Care Strategies to Family Voices of New Jersey at the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network of New Jersey, Inc.

FAMILY VOICES
Speaking on behalf of children with special health care needs

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1-800-654-SPAN x110
www.spannj.org/family_voices.htm
email: familyvoices@spannj.org

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Fact Sheet 7

MEDICAID MANAGED CARE
FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN NEW JERSEY

FAMILY VOICES RESOURCE LIST

Answering Your Questions about Medicaid Managed Care

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Information

SPAN Information Specialists assist parents, educators, service providers in attaining appropriate education and health care services for children

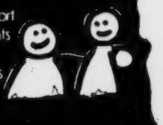
Extensive publications related to education, law and advocacy, school reform, health and disability issues

Annual conference for parents and educators: workshops, networking, exchange of ideas and information

Bilingual (Spanish) information, training and technical assistance

Website: program updates, education news, action alerts, and links to local, statewide and national Internet resources (*www.spannj.org*)

Support



Offering emotional support and information to parents through a bilingual, multi-racial staff of parents of children with and without disabilities

Acting as a valuable resource to families, with targeted support to underserved families in Abbott districts and rural communities

Offering assistance in learning the necessary skills to help parents face the challenges of raising their child

Building a statewide network of parents supporting families of children with developmental delays, disabilities, and special health needs

Training parents of children with disabilities to help other parents

The Mission of the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network

is to empower families and inform and involve professionals and other individuals interested in the healthy development and educational rights of children. Through this collaboration, all children will become fully participating and contributing members of our communities and society.

SPAN's foremost commitment is to children with the greatest need due to disability; poverty; discrimination based on race, sex, or language; geographic location; or other special circumstances.

> Empowering families does not mean giving or bestowing power on families - the power is there by right.
>
> As families, we recognize our strengths and abilities.
>
> It is through our advocacy that we become effective partners and agents for change.

SPAN's work is supported by:

Bright Futures / Maternal and Child Health Bureau of U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Developmental Disabilities Council of NJ

Healthcare Foundation

IOLTA Fund of the NJ Bar Association

Mercer County Division for Youth

NJ Department of Education

NJ Department of Health and Senior Services, Special Child and Adult Health Services

NJ Department of Human Services

Schumann Fund of NJ

U.S. Department of Education

SPAN is a member of:

National Coalition of Advocates for Students

National Parent Network on Disabilities

The Alliance for Parent Centers

Training

Offering workshops and seminars for parents and educators to obtain appropriate educational services for children

Giving parents the skills and knowledge they need to assume important leadership and advisory roles at the state, district and school levels

Professional development provider under the New Jersey Department of Education

Advocacy

Engaging parents and professionals in a movement for comprehensive, coordinated, culturally competent services for children and families across agencies

Advocating for quality transition service needs, the long-range educational plan that ensures students take the appropriate classes in high school

Mobilizing religious and community leaders and the broader community to advocate for revisions to "welfare reform" in New Jersey

Training parents to be effective participants in public policy advocacy on issues affecting their children

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network

serves the communities of New Jersey free of charge. However, we need your support to continue our services to families and professionals throughout the State.

By becoming a member of SPAN you will receive the following:

Three issues of SPAN's newsletter The Bridge, PLUS an additional "Back to School" issue

Reserved seating at our annual conference at a reduced rate

Training materials at a 20% discount

Yes! I would like to become a member of SPAN.

Please enrol me as a member in the following category:

___ **$35** Individual Membership
___ **$50** Family Membership
___ **$100** Friend of SPAN
___ **$150** Professional / Organization
___ **$250** Corporate Member
___ **$500** Executive Benefactor
___ ___ Other (please fill in amount)

Subscription to *The Bridge* ONLY

___ **$25** Four (4) issues of The Bridge
___ I would like to subscribe to The Bridge but I am financially unable to afford the subscription fee. Please consider me for a Sponsored Subscription.
___ **$25** I would like to sponsor a subscription to The Bridge for a family unable to afford it.
___ **Total Amount Enclosed** Please make checks payable to SPAN, Inc. Do not send cash.

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network

Empowered Families:
Educated, Engaged, Effective.

35 Halsey Street, 4th Floor
Newark, New Jersey 07102

Phone: (973) 642-8100
Toll-Free in NJ: (800) 654-SPAN
Fax: (973) 642-8080

E-mail: span@spannj.org
Website: www.spannj.org

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Inc.
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CFCS@spannj.org

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pirc.jerseycity@spannj.org

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pirc.plainfield@spannj.org

CAMDEN
pirc.camden@spannj.org

TRENTON
pirc.trenton@spannj.org

VINELAND
pirc.vineland@spannj.org

Name ____________________
Organization (if applicable) ____________________
Address ____________________
City __________ State __________ Zip __________
Phone __________ Business Phone __________
County __________ E-mail __________

Please return this Membership Application and payment to:

SPAN
35 Halsey Street, 4th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102
Attn: Maria Rodriguez

NEW JERSEY
INCLUSIVE CHILD CARE PROJECT

The **New Jersey Inclusive Child Care Project** is a project spearheaded by SPAN (Statewide Parent Advocacy Network) and funded by the New Jersey Department of Human Services.

The goals of this project are:

- To ***increase the quality*** of early care and education for children with special needs
- To ***increase the number*** of child care providers that offer inclusive child care
- To ***increase awareness*** among parents, child care providers, and resource and referral agencies of the services available for children with special needs
- To ***improve the delivery*** of services for children with special needs through collaboration among providers of child care services and special needs services

Inclusive education is an attitude of acceptance of difference, not a classroom placement.

It is a value of diversity that extends to all children.

NJ INCLUSIVE CHILD CARE PROJECT
PROGRAMS

The **New Jersey Inclusive Child Care Project** provides:

- ***Free information*** (English & Spanish) ***about laws*** affecting inclusion and child care (early childhood and school-age child care programs)
- ***Free information about available services and resources*** in New Jersey for children with special needs
- ***Free workshops*** (English & Spanish) on inclusion awareness as well as "how to" workshops for parents and service providers conducted by nationally acclaimed early childhood experts
- ***Free telephone technical assistance*** regarding early childhood and school-age inclusion using our toll free hotline and/or the Resource and Referral staff of the county-based Unified Child Care Agencies (see insert)
- ***Free on-site consultation and support*** to licensed child care providers and school-age programs on including children with special needs. We can also help you effectively *serve* children (or a specific child) with special needs.

MORE AVAILABLE
RESOURCES AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

In addition to the training and technical assistance available through SPAN's **New Jersey Inclusive Child Care Project**, there are other resources to support the inclusion of children in special needs child care.

Every county in New Jersey has a Unified Child Care Agency (UCCA) which functions as a central clearinghouse for information about child care programs and services available at a local level. For your local UCCA, call 1-800-332-9CARE

NJ INCLUSIVE CHILD CARE PROJECT
WORKSHOPS*
What to Do When You Don't Know What to Do

The **New Jersey Inclusive Child Care Project** offers a variety of workshops for parents and professionals (in English and Spanish) through your local UCCA:

Inclusion: It's the Law and It's Doable

This workshop provides the guiding principles of inclusion, information about the laws affecting it, how children are more alike than different and where to turn for assistance when necessary.

Challenging Behaviors

This workshop concentrates on how to use positive techniques to understand challenging behaviors and establishing an environment that encourages desirable behavior in children.

Observing & Recording Behavior

This workshop reviews typical child development milestones, observation strategies and how to share this information with parents.

Making Inclusion Happen

This workshop helps you understand how to teach to individual abilities and adapt activities to meet the needs of all children.

* Registered provider of professional development through the New Jersey Department of Education

"This workshop gave me more self-confidence. I learned that if I believe I can make a difference, I will."

"I will use the information that I learned in the workshop not only in the classroom but also in my daily life."

"This workshop has shown me that inclusion can be, and is, a very good thing."

INCLUSIVE CHILD CARE

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act prohibit discrimination by child care and school-age child care providers against children with special needs.

Many child care providers, school-age child care providers, and families are unaware of the provisions of these laws or how to effectively include children with special needs.

Just think...
If every child care provider in New Jersey served 1 to 2 children with disabilities, ALL of the classified infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities in New Jersey could participate in settings with their typical peers.

Do you include children with disabilities in your child care setting?
If so, you may qualify for the
Educator of the Month
award and honorarium.
For more information, go to
www.truecoaching.com/pic

Inclusion is a *process*, not an event.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network is to empower families and inform and involve professionals and other individuals interested in the healthy development and educational rights of children. Through this collaboration, all children will become fully participating and contributing members of our communities and society.

SPAN's foremost commitment is to children with the greatest need due to disability; poverty; discrimination based on race, sex, or language; geographic location; or other special circumstances.

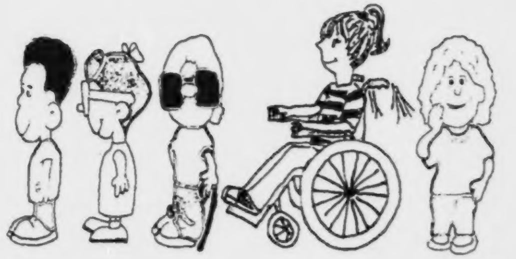
STATEWIDE PARENT
ADVOCACY NETWORK, Inc.

35 Halsey Street, 4th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102
Phone: 973-642-8100
Fax: 973-642-8080
1-800-654-7726
www.spannj.org

NJ Resource & Referral Agencies
1-800-332-9CARE

Original Artwork by Jaclyn Raia

NEW JERSEY INCLUSIVE CHILD CARE PROJECT



Susan Merrill Guider
Project Director

(800) 654-7726 x108
(973) 642-8100 x108
childcare@spannj.org

SPAN
35 Halsey Street, 4th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102
www.spannj.org

Parent Information Resource Centers Project

SPAN, the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, has been awarded a grant from the United States Department of Education for the **Parent Information Resource Centers** (PIRC) **Project** for the State of New Jersey.

Goals

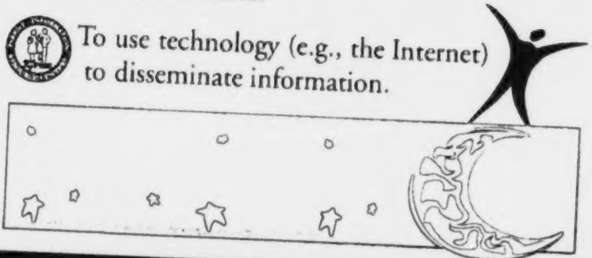
The goal of the **PIRC Project** is to increase and enhance parental involvement and professional capacity to improve educational services and thus outcomes for children, especially children at greatest risk of school failure. The primary focus of the PIRC Project will be to work with parents, community partners and staff in schools across the State of New Jersey, and especially in the Abbott Districts and rural communities.

The PIRC Project will initiate and expand opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's education, and design outreach strategies and services to facilitate local educational priorities.

Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional and academic growth of children.

Objectives

- To assist New Jersey's state and local educational agencies, schools and non-profit organizations, particularly those making substantial efforts to reach a large number or percentage of low-income, minority or limited English proficient children, in developing new outreach strategies.
- To identify and overcome barriers to parent or family involvement in schools.
- To implement high quality parent education and family involvement programs that improve the capacity of parents to participate effectively in the education of their children.
- To promote the effective implementation of research-based, informational activities that support meaningful parent and/or family involvement.
- To disseminate information on high quality parent education and family involvement programs to local educational agencies, schools, and non-profit organizations that serve parents across the state.
- To coordinate activities with federal, state and local parent education and family involvement programs which provide parents and families with training, information and support about helping children prepare for success in schools and achieve high academic standards.
- To use technology (e.g., the Internet) to disseminate information.



Workshops

★ Parent Leadership Development Institute (PLDI)
★ Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families & Communities: A Violence Prevention Parent Training Program
★ ASPIRA's APEX Training
★ The Compact For Reading: Partnering with Parents for Reading Success
★ Solution Circles
★ The Right Question Project (RQP)
★ Parent/Professional Collaboration
★ Positive Behavioral Supports for Children with Challenging Behaviors
★ Conflict Resolution
★ Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
★ Accessing Your Child's Records
★ Supporting Academic Success
★ Title I Services for At-Risk Students
★ Bilingual and Immigrant Student and Family Rights
★ Using Multiple Intelligences to Help Children Learn
★ Discipline: Process and Substance
★ There Ought To Be A Law! Parents Engaged in Public Policy Advocacy
★ Students in Foster Care
★ Making Healthy Health Decisions
★ Creating Positive School Environments
★ School-To-Work
★ The Rights of Homeless Students

Special Education Topics

★ Basic Rights
★ Developing an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for Achievement
★ Early Intervention
★ Families in Early Intervention
★ Family Support
★ Transition from School to Adult Life
★ Getting Started: Creating an Environment for Inclusion to Grow
★ Strategies for Inclusion: Making It Happen
★ Special Education and School Reform

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Regional Offices

Seven regional resource centers are housed in community-based organizations and schools in the Abbott districts of:

Paterson
Multilingual Center of Catholic Family & Community Services
24 DeGrasse Street
Paterson, NJ 07505
(973) 279-7100 x14
Fax: (973) 523-1150
E-mail: CFCS@spannj.org

Newark
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
35 Halsey Street, 4th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102
(800) 654-SPAN (7726) x114
Fax: (973) 642-3766
E-mail: Goals2000@spannj.org

Jersey City
Jersey City Board of Education
346 Claremont Avenue
Jersey City, NJ 07305
(201) 915-6760
Fax: (201) 413-6900
E-mail: pirc.jerseycity@spannj.org

Plainfield
Plainfield Center for Stronger Families
925 Arlington Avenue
Plainfield, NJ 07106
(908) 731-4360 x5098
Fax: (908) 731-4389
E-mail: pirc.plainfield@spannj.org

Camden
ASPIRA
2641 Federal Street
Camden, NJ 08105
(856) 964-9115
Fax: (856) 964-2339
E-mail: pirc.camden@spannj.org

Trenton
ASPIRA
449 Hamilton Avenue
Trenton, NJ 08618
(609) 394-5900
Fax: (609) 394-6553
E-mail: pirc.trenton@spannj.org

Vineland
Vineland Board of Education
625 Plum Street
Vineland, NJ 08361-2942
(856) 794-6700 x2130
Fax: (856) 507-8788
E-mail: pirc.vineland@spannj.org

For more information, contact:
Tonya S. Hall, Project Director
Parent Information Resource Centers
(800) 654-7726 x114
Goals2000@spannj.org

Collaborating Agencies

- ASPIRA-New Jersey
- Paterson Education Fund
- Prevent Child Abuse-New Jersey
- New Jersey Department of Education
- Urban League of Essex
- Catholic Charities - Multilingual Center
- Association for Children of New Jersey
- Special Education Parent's Council
- Brain Injury Association of New Jersey
- Community Agencies Corporation of NJ (10 agencies)
- Jersey City Special Education Parents Council
- Unified Vailsburg Services Organization
- New Jersey Department of Health & Human Services
- Families Achieving the New Standards (FANS)
- Head Start and Even Start of New Jersey
- New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education
- Developmental Disabilities Council
- Jersey City Public Schools
- Plainfield Public Schools
- Vineland Public Schools
- Newark Public Schools
- Education Law Center
- Parent to Parent-New Jersey
- Family Voices-New Jersey

NJ PIRC

PARENT INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTERS
NJ PIRC

New Jersey Parent Information Resource Centers

SPAN

RESOURCE LIST

New Jersey Inclusive Child Care Project

Provides free workshops and free on-site consultation to child care centers, family child care providers, and school-age child care programs

Contact: Susan Merrill Guider
1-800-654-7726 x 108
www.spannj.org

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN)

Provides information, training, technical assistance, and support to families, professionals, and others regarding educational rights and health of children

1-800-654-7726

NJ Resource & Referral Agencies
(also known as Unified Child Care Agencies)

Provides information about child care programs and services available at a local level

1-800-332-9CARE

Special Child Health Services

Provides information for families with children with special health care needs birth to 21

(609) 777-7778

NJ Department of Health & Senior Services -
Early Intervention System

Provides services for infants and toddlers (from birth to 3) who have developmental delays or disabilities as well as support for their families

Contact: Terry L. Harrison
(609) 777-7734 Fax: (609) 292-0296

New Jersey Department of Education
Office of Special Education Programs

Contact: Barbara Tkach, Preschool Coordinator
(609) 984-4950

Learning Resource Centers (LRC) of the
New Jersey Department of Education

Provides workshops, instructional materials, consultation and technical assistance to parents and professionals for a nominal membership fee

LRC North:	Paquita Roberts	(973) 631-6349
LRC Central:	Sue Leonard	(732) 441-0460
LRC South:	Claire Punda	(856) 582-7000 x155

(continued on back)

RESOURCE LIST

(continued)

New Jersey Inclusive Child Care Project
Office of Early Care & Education
New Jersey Department of Human Services
Office of Early Care & Education
Contact: Jane Voorhees (609) 292-8444

New Jersey School-Age Child Care Coalition
Provides training and technical assistance to support out of school time programs on inclusion issues
Contact: Jessica Plauta (973) 597-1050
www.njsacc.org

New Jersey Head Start Association
Contact: Audrey Fletcher
(609) 771-8401 Fax: (609) 771-8405

Quality Improvement Center for Disabilities
New York University School Of Education
Contact: Rose Annussek
1-800-533-1498 Fax: (212) 995-4562

University-Affiliated Program of NJ (UAP)
Provides training, information and support for people with disabilities and supporting agencies
Contact: Karen Melzer
(732) 235-9309 Fax: (732) 235-9330

Family Support Center of New Jersey
Provides one-stop shopping approach to individuals and families about programs, service providers, and community supports
1-800-FSC-NJ10

Healthy Child Care New Jersey Project
Provides child care health consultation concerning health and safety issues in child care settings
Contact: Judith Hall (609) 292-5666

Administration for Children and Families
Child Care Bureau: Inclusion Technical Assistance
Contact: Souvonia Taylor (212) 264-2667

Child Care Law Center
22 Second Street, 5th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 495-5498

United Cerebral Palsy Association of NJ
Provides resources relating to education, employment, assistive technology, advocacy, housing, the ADA, and other concerns for people with all types of disabilities
1-888-322-1918 TTY: (609) 392-7044

The Bridge

Fall 2002

Newsletter of the
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Inc.

IDEA Reauthorization

We Can't Afford To Sit This One Out

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March 14-15, 2003

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Justin Dart, Jr.

Disability Rights Hero

August 29, 1930 - June 22, 2002

"I call for solidarity among all who love justice, all who love life, to create a revolution that will empower every single human being to govern his or her life, to govern the society and to be fully productive of life quality for self and for all."

Empowered Families: Educated, Engaged, Effective.

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Inc.

Empowered Families: Educated, Engaged, Effective.

35 Halsey Street, 4th Floor
Newark, New Jersey 07102

Tel: (800) 654-SPAN (7726)
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Website: www.spannj.org

Diana MTK Autin & Debra Jennings
SPAN Executive Co-Directors

Lauren Agoratus & Beverly Bowser
Project Coordinators, Family Voices / Bright Futures

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Project Coordinator, Community Education Project

Malia Corde
Project Coordinator, NJ Statewide Parent to Parent

Penny Dragonetti
Project Coordinator, Community Resource Centers
Northern Training Specialist

Debra Fernandez
Project Director, Parent Training and Information Center

Sue Merrill
Project Coordinator, NJ Inclusive Child Care Project

Tonya Hall
Project Director, NJ Parent Information Resource Center

Lisa Hermann
Website Coordinator

Alice Hunnicutt
Project Coordinator, Transition to Adult Life

Shirley Johnson
Project Coordinator, Essex Family WRAP

Rose Kardashian
Director, Catholic Family & Community Services
Multilingual Center

Peg Kinsell
Project Coordinator, Community Resource Centers
Southern Training Specialist

Patricia Paraskevacos
Project Coordinator, Project CARE

Mike Sangiovanni
Information & Materials Coordinator
Editor, *The Bridge*

Sh'corah Yehudah
Project Coordinator, Violence Prevention Initiative

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The Bridge

The Bridge is a publication of the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Inc. (SPAN).

The mission of the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network is to empower families and inform and involve professionals and other individuals interested in the healthy development and education rights of children. Through this collaboration, all children will become fully participating and contributing members of our communities and society.

SPAN's foremost commitment is to children with the greatest need due to disability; poverty; discrimination based on race, sex, or language; geographic location; or other special circumstances.

SPAN's multi-faceted program is carried out by a bilingual, multi-racial staff of parents of children with and without disabilities.

From the Executive Co-Directors

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network

Welcome back, Diana! After just over a year's sabbatical, SPAN's Executive Director-on-Leave, Diana Autin, came back to us in September, refreshed, renewed, revitalized and ready to return to the ever-present challenges and rewards of seeking to achieve quality education and health services for ALL children in New Jersey. This is not to say that Diana was on respite during this year. As a fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation's New Generation of Leadership, Diana had an opportunity to share the leadership and commitment that have been important to the development of SPAN with leaders from around the world. Her work included looking behind the hype of the voucher system in Milwaukee, examining economic development challenges in Mexico and exploring issues of racial and cultural diversity in Miami. She is currently collaborating with other NGL Fellows from around the U.S. on a joint project to provide leadership development to immigrant families, youth, and grassroots activists seeking to enhance community and economic development for low-income families.

Diana and Debra Jennings (previously Acting Executive Director) will serve as Executive Co-Directors of SPAN. Diana will focus on SPAN's programs and projects involved in information, training and policy advocacy activities for families with children with special education and/or health needs, including Family WRAP (Wisdom, Resources and Parent to Parent Support for families with children with special health care needs), the Training and Information Center for Families with Children with Special Needs, the Transition to Adult Life and Inclusive Child Care projects. Debra's areas of focus are SPAN's involvement in programs and projects to inform and engage parents in improving schools, violence prevention, achieving better academic outcomes for all children and partnering with educators and administrators to attain these goals. The programs in this area include the Parent Information and Resource Center, the START (Statewide Technical Assistance and Resources Team of the NJ Office of Special Programs) initiative, Parents as Teachers©, Strengthening Families and Communities violence prevention programs and our work with families of migrant workers.

With the transition to new leadership in our state, both in the legislative and executive branches of our government, and with the reauthorization of IDEA at the federal level, there are numerous areas that need the voices, concerns and insights of families to be included in order for changes in policy to positively impact our children. Bills for the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are being drafted as you are reading these words. It is anticipated that the house and senate will move quickly after the elections to get a new law in place. Early indicators are that too many of the changes to IDEA will focus on the cries of schools and administrators to reduce the "paperwork" at the expense of the educational rights of children with disabilities and their families. Keep abreast of the movement on IDEA and how you can make a difference by checking our website, *www.spannj.org*, and joining our action alert network.

Many state and local committees say that they want to include families in policymaking and SPAN wants to hold them to these statements. Some of the areas where family voices are needed include:

1. In his Education Summit, the Governor outlined his commitment to improving parent involvement in education. One of his initiatives is to ensure there are no barriers and that teachers and administrators improve the capacity of schools to better involve families in their children's education.
2. Abbott Implementation II. A number of committees, workgroups, and subcommittees are looking at every aspect of the implementation of the Abbott v. Burke decision on funding for schools in so-called "special needs" districts. These committees are reviewing every aspect including early childhood education, school based management, school planning, budgeting, whole school reform models, needs assessment, staff development, accountability and how to measure progress. Parents and caregivers are needed to comment on proposals and ensure that the barriers that have hindered the progress of these districts.
3. Implementation of the Children's System of Care Initiative for Children with Special Emotional Needs has been delayed by budget reductions for this program. However, planning for programs in additional counties as well as evaluating and improving implementation in the current counties continues. Family members are needed to serve on and to monitor state-level committees, as well as for the local boards of family support organization and care management organizations that plan the services for children.

4. It may not be widely publicized in your community, but your local school districts are participating in continuous improvement monitoring and self-assessment activities to address special education in your district. This process requires the participation of families and students.
5. If your child attends one of New Jersey's 300 schools categorized as "in need of improvement" under the No Child Left Behind Act, you should know about the requirements for parents to be involved in planning programs and services to provide extra help for students, putting together compacts or agreements as to how everyone in the school community (teachers, administrators, aides, parents/caregivers, students, custodial staff – everyone) will be involved in improving student performance, and in helping parents to obtain the skills and knowledge needed to work with their children and the school.

Each of you can be a part of making a difference. Contact SPAN, if you are interested in state level participation or if you are having a hard time identifying what is going on in your local school community. If you don't think that you have the skills or knowledge to participate and contribute, contact SPAN to take advantage of one of our many Parent/Caregiver Leadership Development activities. Let's all get Back to School!

Diana MTK Autin

Diana MTK Autin, Esq.
SPAN Executive Co-Director

Debra Jennings
SPAN Executive Co-Director

SAVE the DATE

Making Connections for Student Success

SPAN Conference 2003

- Family-Friendly Schools
- Violence Prevention
- Special Education
- School Improvement
- Juvenile Justice
- Cultural Competence

- Bilingual Education
- Public Policy
- Health Care Issues
- Literacy
- Welfare Reform
- Children's Mental Health

Friday, March 14 & Saturday, March 15, 2003
Hilton Conference Center, East Brunswick, NJ

SPAN Conference 2003
March 14 & 15, 2003

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network

Exhibitor Application

Exhibitor Registration Includes:

The opportunity to display and promote products and services to hundreds of families and professionals

Display table and 2 chairs

Registration and lunch for 2 people both days

24-hour hotel security

Electrical outlet(s), if necessary

Listing on our website: www.spannj.org

Company Name (as it will appear in program):

____

Contact Person: ______________ Title: ________

Address: ______________________________

City: ______________ State: ____ Zip: ________

Phone: ________ Fax: ________ E-mail: ________

Website: ______________________________

Name of person(s) staffing booth:

1. ______________ 2. ______________

Electrical outlets: ______ Display dimensions: ________

	RATE	TOTAL
Table Registration: For profit rate	**$700**	________
Table Registration: Nonprofit rate	**$450**	________
Ad Journal:		
Full page (8.5" x 11")	**$350**	________
1/2 page (8.5" x 5.5")	**$200**	________
1/4 page (4.25" x 5.5")	**$125**	________

Please make check payable to:
STATEWIDE PARENT ADVOCACY NETWORK
35 Halsey Street, 4th Floor * Newark, NJ 07102 * Attn: Debra Jennings

TOTAL ________

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
35 Halsey Street, 4th Floor * Newark, New Jersey 07102
(800) 654-SPAN * fax (973) 642-8080 * span@spannj.org * www.spannj.org

IDEA Reauthorization:

We Can't Afford To Sit This One Out

Adapted from The Bridge, a publication of the Advocacy Center, Rochester, NY, December [illegible]

President Bush has created the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education to study federal, state and local special education programs. [The commission, chaired by former Governor Terry Branstad, delivered recommendations to the president this past spring].

Mr. Branstad was recently quoted as stating, *"In our state, nearly 60 percent of the budget goes for education. And what we find is people are willing to invest in quality education but they're also fiscally conservative. They want to see results. They want to see achievement for the dollars they put in. I think the federal government in its mandates in the area of special ed has driven up costs needlessly. I think that needs to be reviewed. I want to see every child have an opportunity to learn. All special ed children do have a right to an education, but to spend tens of thousands of dollars on kids that really are not going to be able to support themselves or be able to really learn a great deal at the expense of the general education of the rest of the students is not fair. And so that has to be addressed. A lot of people are afraid of it, of being, you know, accused of being insensitive or whatever. I was in Sioux City, Iowa, yesterday, and I heard a Teacher of the Year, Nancy Mounts, who had been a Teacher of the Year and the superintendent there about how their school is being squeezed because of the federal mandates in the area of special ed and how there needs to be more flexibility and latitude given to local school districts in that area."*

Parents, advocates, and educators - we have a lot of work to do! We can't predict what recommendations the former governor's committee will make, though the tone and message in his statements indicate that parents and advocates everywhere are going to have to work especially hard to guarantee that basic tenets of the original law remain intact.

Stay informed. Watch the PIC website for alerts and let your elected officials know how important IDEA is. Everyone must get involved if we are going to maintain the current IDEA protections for children with disabilities and they parents. If special education is important to you, you really can't afford to sit this one out.

IDEA Reauthorization

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the Federal law which requires that every child with a disability who is eligible for special education receive a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. In New Hampshire, our state special education law, RSA 186-C, and regulations, The NH Rules for the Education of Children with Disabilities, are based on IDEA.

It seems only yesterday that the IDEA amendments of 1997 were signed into law. Now, here we are four years later and reauthorization is once again looming. Reauthorization occurs almost every five years and is a process that Congress uses to take a look at a specific piece of legislation to see if changes need to be made. Any changes in IDEA, whether they are positive or negative changes, may impact special education for children. It is critical that each of us takes the responsibility to advocate for our children by getting involved in the reauthorization of IDEA.

The current IDEA was signed into law on June 4, 1997 after two years of debate, hearings, meetings between administration and Congressional staff and input from parents, disability organizations and education groups representing teachers, principals, and state/local school board members. It contained the most significant changes to the law since its enactment in 1975.

During its next session, Congress will once again take on the reauthorization of the IDEA. Already, national policy makers are saying that the IDEA is "due for a major overhaul." While we do not know all that this means, various groups are making their lists which include these and other issues:

- Discipline of students with disabilities and giving school administrators the same authority to suspend/expel students with disabilities as they now have for students without disabilities. This could mean a push for giving school administrators suspension/expulsion decision-making authority that would bypass the IEP team.
- Cessation of educational services when students with disabilities are suspended/expelled.
- Correcting over-representation and misclassification of minority students in special education.
- Addressing the continuing increase in the number of students being labeled LD and ADD, and finding ways to determine if these students really have a disability, or if they have just not been taught well.
- Improvements in professional trainings, recruitment and retention.
- Use of research-based strategies in determining a child's disability, for helping children learn to read, and early identification of disabilities in children to avoid special education placement, where possible.
- Reducing access to attorney's fee reimbursements when parents prevail in due process hearings or court, stronger mediation to resolve disagreements between schools and parents and limiting the issues upon which a due process hearing can be requested.
- Using research-based strategies to ensure successful placements in the least restrictive environment.
- Fully funding the IDEA.

Those of us who were around for the 1997 reauthorization remember the hard-fought battle to protect even the most basic IDEA guarantees. In spite of the battle, or maybe because of it, the basic protections remained in place, and many good protections were included. There is every indication that the upcoming reauthorization will require even more intense advocacy, if all that embodies the free appropriate public education for children with disabilities is to be preserved.

However, throughout the last reauthorization, Congressional members and U.S. Department of Education officials repeatedly reported that they did not hear from parents on important issues, including least restrictive environment, identification, independent educational evaluation, private school placement and services, attorney fees and discipline of students with disabilities.

It is [time] for parents to become informed, to begin [to add] their concerns and suggestions to the discussion and to discuss their issues with Congress. Once the work of reauthorization begins, parents will want to stay informed and active, so that their voices are heard.

How can parents keep up with what is happening in Congress? Where can parents go to find out about the changes that are being suggested, considered or debated? How can parents be sure that their ideas and concerns are heard? The following are just a few web sites that may serve as important sources of information about current events, discussions and ways to have input into the decisions Congressional members will be making about the reauthorization of the IDEA.

Center for Law and Education
www.cleweb.org

National Parent Network on Disabilities
www.npnd.org

The Action Starts Here
www.tash.org

Learning Disabilities Association
www.ldanatl.org

Council for Children
with Behavioral Disorders
www.ccbd.net

Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program
www.adap.net

The ARC of the United States
www.thearc.org

United Cerebral Palsy
www.ucp.org

National Education Association
www.nea.org

American Federation of Teachers
www.aft.org

Disability Rights
Education and Defense Fund
www.dredf.org

Special Education Action Committee
home.hiwaay.net/~seachsv

FAST

Families and Schools Together

Work for Children

A partnership between

Black Ministers'
Council of New Jersey
336 Oakwood Avenue, Orange, NJ 07050
Phone: 973-678-1217 Fax: 973-678-1293

New Jersey
Education Association
P.O. Box 1211, Trenton, NJ 08607-1211
Phone: 609-599-4561 Fax: 609-392-6321

ALERT!

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT BILL POISED TO MOVE THROUGH THE LEGISLATURE

A coalition of concerned parents, school employees and members of the clergy along with members of the Legislature, have worked on a bi-partisan basis to introduce legislation which would allow parents and guardians of children with special needs to take paid leave time to attend meetings, conferences, functions and events at their child's school.

S-126/A-831 would provide up to 24 hours of paid family leave time during any 12-month period for a parent or guardian of a child with special needs in a public school. Special needs are defined broadly under the bill and include not only children with disabilities, but any child who has "specific academic needs or disciplinary concerns, including but not limited to, behavior problems, social problems, problems with tardiness or lateness and health-related concerns." This paid leave would be for the purpose of allowing the parent or guardian to attend any school-related conference, meeting event or function which is requested or required by the school administration, teacher or other professional staff member. Both public and private employers with 50 or more employees would fall under the provisions of this bill.

This legislation would allow parent(s) or guardian(s) of a child with special needs, to be involved in their child's progress in school as well as develop a better working relationship with his or her teachers and other school staff. The importance of communication between parents and teachers, relative to the progress of their children, especially children with special needs, cannot be underestimated. This is a benefit that can't be counted in dollars; it can be the key to your child's success, not only in school, but in all future endeavors.

To Do:

- ✓ Contact your legislator(s) with a message of support for S-126/A-831.
- ✓ Spread the word about S-126/A-831 to other parents and guardians and members of your organization and ask them to contact their legislators in support of these bills.
- ✓ Stay tuned for more information as these bills move through the Legislature.

In The News

President's Commission Issues Report on Special Education; Points Reviewed

By Patricia Bill, from Fall 2002 issue of Pacesetter, newsletter of Pacer Center, www.pacer.org

Parents, advocates, and others concerned about the education of children with disabilities are reviewing New ERA: Revitalizing Special Education for Children and their Families, a report of the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education.

The report is expected to affect the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Released July 9, it contains the 19-member commission's recommendations for special education.

"While parents across the nation appreciate the time and attention given by the members of the Commission to this effort and acknowledge some positive themes and recommendations directed toward improving educational outcomes for children with disabilities, we, nonetheless, have some significant concerns," said members of the National Coalition of Parent Centers, an advocacy group that represents parents' interests and is funded by private contributions.

Coalition members continued, "We, as parents, know what IDEA requires and want to ensure that it continues to require that students with disabilities

- participate fully in the state accountability system,
- receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) - meaning that they must be provided the opportunity to learn what all other nondisabled students are expected to know and be able to do so while participating in the general curriculum, and
- be educated in the regular education classroom to the maximum extent appropriate."

Coalition members focused on eight areas of the report. They are:

Short-term objectives

The report recommended eliminating short-term objectives.

The coalition said that short-term objectives, or benchmarks, provide periodic checks to help measure progress of special education students over the course of the school year. If IDEA leaves out short-term objectives, there will be no way for individualized education program (IEP) teams to measure progress made toward reaching the annual goals. Removing short-term objectives would reduce schools' accountability.

Three-year evaluations

The report suggested doing away with three-year evaluations.

The coalition said that the purpose of a three-year evaluation is to reexamine a child's eligibility and to ensure that a child's disability-related educational needs are being properly addressed. Short assessments are not as thorough as evaluations and will not give as accurate a picture of a student's overall needs, the coalition said. They are concerned that if services are prematurely discontinued, students can regress and fall. Three-year evaluations help prevent over-identification of children by identifying those who no longer need specialized instruction to address their disability-related needs.

Folding eligibility categories

The President's commission recommended folding 13 categories into three.

The coalition said such action would likely result in many students not having their individual needs recognized or met. It is also likely to result in more unqualified teachers providing services to children with certain disabilities.

Waiving paperwork

The commission suggested that 10 states be allowed to submit proposals to reduce IDEA paperwork and that states be allowed a waiver of federal paperwork requirements for a time, with findings reported to Sec'y of Education Rod Paige.

Members of the coalition said that monitoring, through documentation, holds schools accountable in providing appropriate education for individual children with disabilities. The documentation also indicates whether the services provided by taxpayers are used effectively. Waivers may result in states and schools not being accountable, the coalition said.

Redirecting IDEA funds to students without disabilities

The commission proposed diverting special education funds to general education in some situations.

The coalition pointed out that nearly everyone agrees that the federal government does not provide sufficient funding to implement IDEA effectively now. Allowing IDEA funds to be used in serving children who don't have disabilities will make things worse, it said. Accountability is needed in general education to ensure that all students have their needs met.

Creating vouchers

The commission proposes that IDEA should allow state use of federal special education funds to allow students with disabilities to attend schools or access services of their families' choosing.

Vouchers may create a false hope for families because it is not likely that the vouchers would be in an amount needed to effectively serve the child. IDEA funds only a small portion of the costs to educate children with disabilities. Moving children and the accompanying special education funding out of public schools will weaken the public school system that makes available FAPE for all children while failing to guarantee FAPE for those children using vouchers, said parents and advocates in the parent coalition.

Dispute resolution

The commission recommends binding arbitration as a way to resolve difference between parents and schools.

Parents and advocates said they appreciate the commission's recommendation to create ways to solve problems without litigation and added that efforts such as conciliation, mediation, and facilitated IEPs are effective alternatives. They added, however, that binding arbitration does not appear to be a positive alternative, because families would give up all rights to appeal a decision.

National grant review panels

The commission proposed systemic changes in the way special education is delivered and evaluated and placed an emphasis on research.

The coalition responded, "While we agree with efforts to promote best practices based on sound research, the commission's proposal in this area will eliminate the active participation of many parents in the grant review process. Since parents are the child's primary teacher and research indicates that active parent involvement benefits children in school, we are concerned about why parental input in the grant review process is viewed as negative.

"Parents and persons with disabilities are often in the best position to understand how proposals will directly impact children with disabilities and their families. They should be included in the OSEP grant review process," said the coalition.

SPAN Executive Co-Director Receives Distinguished Service Award

Diana Autin, SPAN's Executive Co-Director, received the 2002 Distinguished Service Award from the New Jersey Speech-Language Hearing Association this past May. This award is given annually to recognize contributions that further the profession and the interests of those served by the profession.

Dr. Barbara Glazewski, professor at Kean University and former president of NJSHA, nominated Ms. Autin for this prestigious award. In her introduction to Ms. Autin at the Awards Ceremony, Ms. Glazewski summarized the contributions that led to her award:

"The Distinguished Service Award is presented to Diana MTK Autin, Esq. As Executive Director of the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network of New Jersey, she has dedicated her career to advocating for students' rights in the schools. Diana is an attorney and the parent of a special needs child. She has used her expertise as an attorney to help other parents advocate for appropriate educational programs for their children.

Diana has collaborated with NJSHA over the years to aid in its mission to advocate for children with speech-language-hearing disorders. She has made several presentations at NJSHA conventions, including an advocacy training presentation, and participated as a presenter in NJSHA's all-day advocacy track at the May 2001 convention. She serves on numerous committees on national, state, and local levels, ranging from the Steering Committee of the National Coalition of Advocates for Students, the Governor's Commission on Early Childhood, the Advisory Committee on the Abbott Early Childhood Study, and Co-President of the Council of PTAs in Montclair. She has also been a member of the Developmental Disabilities Council and is a frequent presenter of testimony regarding special education issues to the New Jersey Board of Education.

She has been my personal mentor in the area of inclusion, motivating me to provide speech services in inclusive settings in Elizabeth, New Jersey. She is the conscience of education in New Jersey, and truly deserves this award. NJSHA is proud to award the Distinguished Service Award to Diana MTK Autin, Esq."

In receiving her award, Diana acknowledged the work of all SPAN staff, and of the members of NJSHA, in supporting families and children:

"I know that this award reflects not only my own work but also the work of all my colleagues and friends at the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network. At SPAN, our primary focus is Empowered, Educated, Engaged, and Effective Families – because as families we are critical to ensuring that our children receive the services and support they need.

But as families we can't do it alone; we need the support of professionals interested in ensuring healthy development and quality education for our children. The leadership and members of the New Jersey Speech-Language-Hearing Association have been strong partners with SPAN in advocating for the rights of children.

Five years ago, Barbara Glazewski and I developed a guide for joint public policy advocacy by consumers and professionals. This guide has been used to train parents and professionals not only here in New Jersey but nationally as well. In New Jersey alone, over 800 parents and professionals have participated in this training and now are part of a strong and effective public policy advocacy network.

SPAN and NJSHA also collaborated in the Coalition of Advocates for Children with Special Needs, helping to shape revisions to the state special education code. We have worked together on the New Jersey Developmental Disabilities Council Education Committee, and on the Inclusive Education Summit and the Inclusive Education Institute that grew out of that Summit. Sue Goldman has written excellent articles for parents that have been included in SPAN's newsletter, The Bridge*. Our collaboration has strengthened all our efforts on behalf of children in this state."*

Other awards presented at the ceremony include the Marni Reisberg Scholarship Awards, Distinguished Clinical Awards, Program of the Year Awards, the Appreciation Award, and Honors of the Association, as well as Achiever of the Year Awards for people with speech-language-hearing disabilities. Maria McDermott received the Achiever of the Year Award for Education:

"Maria McDermott is being recognized as one of NJSHA's speech achievers of the year. Maria is a vivacious 13-year old who has learned to cope with and function within the realm of marked auditory processing deficits. These deficits have in turn impacted Maria's expressive and receptive language abilities, thus providing Maria the daily challenge of growing up learning and living with a communication impairment. In spite of her communication difficulties, she has become a gifted artist and participates in many extracurricular activities. For over 5 years Maria has spent countless hours working to increase her communication skills, successfully completing various timely and challenging programs… and still finds time to pursue dance, art, horseback riding, and a myriad host of other activities. As Maria developed into a teenager, it would be expected that her priorities would shift to her social life, but her time working on communication skills has remained a continued commitment, and she has reaped the rewards, both socially and academically.

SPAN Executive Co-Director
Diana MTK Autin, Esq.

Maria has shown a mature understanding of her own deficits and appreciates the help that she is receiving. She consistently demonstrates hard work, dedication, and a perseverance that is remarkable. Maria's successes are also a product of the unconditional love and nurturing provided by her mother, father, two brothers, and grandmother, all of whom acknowledge her needs in a positive manner. They do not provide crutches or bandages when difficulties arise, but provide Maria with strategies and constant support that ultimately helps further her progress.

It is Maria's personal hallmark of motivation, commitment, and ultimate success in all her endeavors, whether it is tutoring and therapy sessions, drawing classes, or dance, that qualifies her to be the Speech Achiever of the Year-Education."

Maria gave a brief but heartwarming and inspirational acceptance speech:

"Thank you for your award. Thank you for all your hard work with children who need help. When I was little, I felt shy because I didn't know how to talk. I didn't feel smart. I felt stupid for not saying anything. I didn't understand what the other children were saying. I was afraid to talk to children I didn't know, because I would mix up words.

Now I understand people and talk to them. I understand my teachers much better. My tutor, Margaret Forsyth, has worked with me for five years. She has helped me to speak and understand. To her, and to you, for all your students who can't say it yet, thank you!"

Justin Dart

An Obituary

Excerpted from a June 22, 2002 article by Fred Fay & Fred Pelka, written at Justin Dart's request.

Justin Dart, Jr., a leader of the international disability rights movement and a renowned human rights activist, died at his home in Washington D.C. He was widely recognized as "the father of the Americans with Disabilities Act" and "the godfather of the disability rights movement."

Dart was a leader in the disability rights movement for three decades, and an advocate for the rights of women, people of color, and gays and lesbians. The recipient of five presidential appointments and numerous honors, including the Hubert Humphrey Award of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, Dart was on the podium on the White House lawn when President George H. Bush signed the ADA into law in July 1990. Dart was also a highly successful entrepreneur, using his personal wealth to further his human rights agenda by generously contributing to organizations, candidates, and individuals, becoming what he called "a little PAC for empowerment."

Until the end, Dart remained dedicated to his vision of a "revolution of empowerment." This would be, he said, "a revolution that confronts and eliminates obsolete thoughts and systems, that focuses the full power of science and free-enterprise democracy on the systematic empowerment of every person to live his or her God-given potential." Dart never hesitated to emphasize the assistance he received from those working with him, most especially his wife of more than thirty years, Yoshiko Saji. "She is," he often said, "quite simply the most magnificent human being I have ever met."

Time and again Dart stressed that his achievements were only possible with the help of hundreds of activists, colleagues, and friends. "There is nothing I have achieved, and no addiction I have overcome, without the love and support of specific individuals who reached out to empower me... There is nothing I have accomplished without reaching out to empower others." Dart protested the fact that he and only three other disability activists were on the podium when President Bush signed the ADA, believing that "hundreds of others should have been there as well."

After receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Dart sent out replicas of the award to hundreds of disability rights activists across the country, writing that, "this award belongs to you."

Dart is best known for his work in passing the Americans with Disabilities Act. In 1988, he was appointed, along with parents' advocate Elizabeth Boggs, to chair the Congressional Task Force on the Rights and Empowerment of Americans with Disabilities. The Darts toured the country at their own expense, visiting every state, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the District of Columbia, holding public forums attended by more than 30,000 people. Everywhere he went, Dart touted the ADA as "the civil rights act of the future." Dart also met extensively with members of Congress and staff, as well as President Bush, Vice President Quayle, and members of the Cabinet. At one point, seeing Dart at a White House reception, President Bush introduced him as "the ADA man." The ADA was signed into law on July 26, 1990, an anniversary that is celebrated each year by "disability pride" events all across the country.

Justin Dart, Jr.
August 29, 1930 - June 22, 2002

After passage of the ADA, Dart threw his energy into the fight for universal health care, again campaigning across the country, and often speaking from the same podium as President and Mrs. Clinton. With the defeat of universal health care, Dart was among the first to identify the coming backlash against disability rights. He resigned all his positions to become "a full-time citizen soldier in the trenches of justice." With the conservative Republican victory in Congress in 1994, followed by calls to amend or even repeal the ADA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Dart and disability rights advocates Becky Ogle and Frederick Fay founded Justice for All, what Dart called "a SWAT team" to beat back these attacks. Again, Dart was tireless - traveling, speaking, testifying, holding conference calls, presiding over meetings, calling the media on its distortions of the ADA, and flooding the country with American flag stickers that said, "ADA, IDEA, America Wins." Both laws were saved.

Toward the end of his life, Dart was hard at work on a political manifesto that would outline his vision of "the revolution of empowerment." In its conclusion, he urged his "Beloved colleagues in struggle, listen to the heart of this old soldier. Our lives, our children's lives, the quality of the lives of billions in future generations hangs in the balance. I cry out to you from the depths of my being. Humanity needs you! Lead! Lead! Lead the revolution of empowerment!"

Violence Prevention Resource Guide for Parents:

A Summary

The information contained in this summary is taken from the Middle Years chapter of the Violence Prevention Resource Guide for Parents *by Peggy Patten and Anne S. Robertson (Champaign, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, 2001).*

Perhaps it is not surprising that the link between doing poorly in school and engaging in other risky behaviors is well documented. It is also not surprising that children who do well in school and are connected to school through school activities such as music, sports, or clubs are less likely to become involved in risky activities such as substance abuse, crime, or violence. As parents, you have critical influence over your child's school success in several important areas.

Those areas include:

Connectedness. Encourage your child's attachment to parents, guardians, grandparents, teachers, or mentors who will support lasting relationships and friendships.

Competency. Help your child develop academic and social skills, including the ability to solve problems and make age-appropriate, independent decisions.

Aspirations. Support your child's ability to set goals for a successful future and develop strategies for achieving those goals.

Effective schools. Help your child to find a supportive, safe learning environment that challenges all students to do well and that supports them in their efforts to do so.

Parents play an important role on their child's teaching team. Making time to attend parent teacher conferences and school activities is one part of that role. Being available to help if the teachers have a concern about your child's progress also shows that you care. It helps to make time to talk to the teacher if you have questions or are worried about how your child is doing. While some teachers may hesitate to intervene unless a child is lagging two or more grade levels behind other students in the class, the evidence suggests that early intervention is critical. The further behind a student falls in his or her school work, the more likely it is that he or she will fail and will develop a sense of hopelessness. Seek out the teacher and discuss what you can do before your child's academic problems become overwhelming.

One way that parents can help teachers identify problems early is by sharing their concerns and being open about relevant parts of their child's history. Parents can also take the lead and request an assessment if they are concerned that their child might have a learning disability. When parents, teachers, and school staff work together, most difficulties can be resolved and strategies can be developed that will help the child have a successful school experience.

Violence Prevention Initiative

More and more evidence appears each day that shows the interconnection of different forms of violence:

Violence against the Self	Violence against the Family	Violence against the Community
drugs/alcohol, depression/suicide	*domestic violence, child abuse*	*juvenile delinquency, crime, gangs*

In addition, the inabilities to manage emotions, express feelings, and resolve conflict have been shown to be related to violence against others.

Parent education/training has received national recognition as a critical violence prevention strategy. That is why the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) has introduced its

Violence Prevention Initiative,

providing training, support and information for schools and community groups in the Abbott districts. These parenting programs help to reduce youth violence and behaviors such as alcohol and drug use that increase the likelihood of violence in the following ways:

(a) *By helping parents communicate more effectively with their children, including verbal and nonverbal communication, and thus build stronger family bonds*

(b) *By helping parents help their children make good choices and avoid bad ones. Too often parents feel that merely by prohibiting a particular behavior their child will conform, even without having the skills to avoid those behaviors.*

(c) *By helping parents be more competent in dealing with their children in a variety of arenas, from rule-setting and imposition of effective consequences to working with education, health and other professionals to support their children's education and healthy development.*

These impacts on parents result in increased child self-esteem, self-discipline, social competency skills, and capacity to avoid pressures to engage in substance abuse and violence.

Statewide
Parent
Advocacy
Network

For more information, please contact

Sh'corah Yehudah
(973) 642-8100 x113
vpc@spannj.org

New Jersey
Parent Information Resource Centers

Title I Schools in Need of Improvement

Today, increasingly loud voices, many belonging to parents and policymakers, are demanding more from our nation's public school and expecting more from our public school students. In response, education is focusing on helping all children reach high standards of learning.

Despite this renewed focus, some schools face serious and systemic challenges that undermine the teaching and learning process and students are failing to meet even minimum standards of achievement.

Acting under the provisions of a new federal Title I law, the New Jersey Department of Education has identified schools in need of improvement. The New Jersey schools were identified through a process linking academic skills with student performance on standardized tests. Schools identified as needing improvement must develop improvement plans showing the programs and strategies to be adopted to improve teaching and learning. And parents should be participants in the plan's development which must also provide their staffs with professional development to improve their skills.

If your child is enrolled in a school that has been identified as a school in need of improvement, you will be notified once the 2002-2003 school year begins. Schools will also have to provide parents of students in schools designated as in need of improvement for two years with the opportunity to transfer to another school in the district that is not identified for improvement. This process is known as *School Choice.*

School Choice

Open Enrollment

Some districts offer open enrollment across all of the schools of the district that serve the same grades. This is the optimum choice design, allowing parents to select the school that they would like their child to attend. Magnet schools exemplify this open enrollment option. Such a policy meets full choice requirements.

Limited Choice Opportunities

Some districts may be only able to offer choice on a limited basis. The schools first enroll children from the local surrounding neighborhood, and then have a limited number of class spaces available for other children from other neighborhoods. When choices are limited, procedures for offering choice in a fair, non-discriminatory fashion must be laid out. Under Title I, it is suggested that low-performing students from low-performing schools be offered the first opportunity to fill these limited spaces. In some instances, lotteries provide an impartial process for responding to transfer or choice requests.

Transportation

Districts must provide transportation required for a student to exercise public school choice under school improvement, corrective action, restructuring, or interdistrict choice offered as part of corrective action for a school.

Schools Lacking Capacity

In some instances, a district may lack the capacity to offer choice. A clear example is a district with only one school or one school serving a grade level. Other factors that demonstrate lack of capacity include:

- Districts that cannot offer the option to transfer to a higher performing school because all schools within the district serving a grade level have performed the same, e.g. they are all identified as in need of improvement. In such an instance there is no viable choice option;
- Districts cannot offer choice without exceeding state established class size limitations, e.g. the school that would be a choice option school is at full class size capacity.

When districts lack capacity to offer intradistrict choice, they should advise parents of state interdistrict choice options. The Interdistrict Public School Choice Program (School Choice Program) is a five-year pilot program designed to increase educational opportunities for New Jersey students and their families by providing students with the option of attending a public school outside their district of residence without cost to their parents. Under the School Choice Program, interested New Jersey school districts apply to become choice districts, that is, districts that designate specific open seats into which they will accept non-resident students at the expense of the state.

The options under Interdistrict choice are:

- Charter schools or
- Choice schools

If a school has been identified as in need of improvement for three years, the school must arrange for supplemental services to be provided to students.

(See the following page for more information.)

Supplemental Services

As part of President Bush's *No Child Left Behind* law, when a disadvantaged child is attending a low performing school, federal funds can be used to provide "supplemental services" for that child.

What are "supplemental services"?

The term "supplemental services" refers to extra help provided to students in reading, language arts and math. This extra help can be provided before or after school, or on weekends.

How will I know if my child is eligible for supplemental services?

If your family is classified as low-income by your school district and your child's school is designated as needing improvement for the second year, then your child is eligible.

How do I choose a good program?

The law requires that "supplemental educational service" providers adhere to high-quality, research-based instruction. Your school district is required to give you information about every available program in your area—including information about the providers, their qualifications and their effectiveness. District officials will help you select a provider, if you request their guidance.

How does my provider get paid?

In most cases your school district will pay for the supplemental services directly. Once you select a program or tutor, you will meet with the provider and district staff. You will all set specific academic goals for your child, how these goals will be measured, and when they will be achieved. Contact your principal to find out how it works.

Intradistrict School Choice

A Q&A on Options for Children Enrolled in Title I Schools in Need of Improvement

www.state.nj.us/njded/news/0603title1_a2.htm

What is Title I?

Title I is a federally funded program that provides additional education resources and services for schools that serve low-income children.

What does it mean to be a school in need of improvement?

Schools in need of improvement are those that have not met the state's performance standards on state tests and have not made what is determined to be adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward meeting state standards in either language arts/literacy or mathematics.

What must a school do if it has not made adequate yearly progress?

Schools failing to make adequate yearly progress must do the following:

- Develop a plan to improve school performance. This plan could call for new teaching strategies, more teacher training and/or other strategies designed to boost student performance;
- Offer intensive professional development and training to prepare teachers to use new teaching strategies and skills aimed at improving student performance; and
- Offer intradistrict school choice that gives parents the opportunity to transfer their child to another school that is higher performing within the district.

Is there anything else these schools should do?

It is strongly suggested that the school invite parents to help them in two ways:

- To provide input to school personnel as they identify ways to change their school programs and perhaps school operations, and
- To join as partners with the school in supporting their child's learning.

How can I help support my child and his/her learning?

What is important to parents becomes important to children. Parents can show their children that education is important by asking what they learned and what happened in school each day and by asking if they have any homework and requesting to see it. By doing these simple things, you can support your child's education. Additionally, reading with young children and helping with homework can support their learning.

What are the choices I have if I want to move my child?

The Title I law calls for intradistrict choice, which means you may request to transfer your child from his/her low-performing school to another school within the district.

What if my school district says they lack capacity to offer choice?

Many districts do lack capacity. New Jersey is the most densely populated state in the country. This is reflected in the high enrollments and overcrowding in some schools. Unfortunately, many schools and districts will not be able to offer intradistrict choices.

What can I do if my school lacks capacity and can't offer intradistrict choice?

New Jersey is a "choice" state that offers interdistrict options in some areas. These choices include charter schools and choice schools. To find out where charter and choice schools are located and how to apply for enrollment in them, you may call (609) 984-7306 or go to the New Jersey Department of Education's Web site at *www.state.nj.us/education*, then click on school choice or charter schools.

What other opportunities for choice are there if there is not a public charter or choice school in my area?

Other than public school choices, you can still choose to enroll your child in a nonpublic school. Nevertheless, if you choose this option, the responsibility for tuition payment remains solely with the parent, since this is not a free public school choice. Additionally, some parents choose to homeschool their children.

How can I find out what choices my school district offers?

Schools have only recently been notified of their status. Many are still reviewing data and deciding what steps they need to take to comply with these new accountability requirements. At this time, therefore, you may need to wait before you receive more information from your school. Call your school principal for further information regarding local plans.

New Jersey Parent Information Resource Centers

Tonya Hall, Project Director

For more information, please contact the following Parent Information Resource Centers:

Newark
& surrounding area
Geraldine Moore (800) 654-7726 x118

Jersey City
& surrounding area
Elaine Cueto (800) 654-7726

Elizabeth
& surrounding area
Linda Olive (908) 436-5475

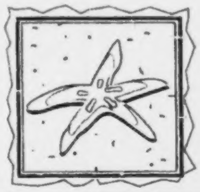
Plainfield
& surrounding area
Patricia Lovelace (908) 731-4360

Paterson
& surrounding area
Rose Kardashian (973) 523-8404 x41

Trenton
Audrey Gaskin (609) 394-5900

Vineland
Noemi Santiago (856) 794-6700 x2130

What's Happening at SPAN



Parent Training and Information Center (PTI)

for Families of Children with Special Education Needs

Debra Fernandez, Project Director

Individual Advocacy and Empowerment

The school year is in high gear and hopefully, all of our children's Individual Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 service plans are working well, with all of the appropriate supports and services in place (and actually *taking* place)! As Director of SPAN's Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) for Families of Children with Special Education Needs and the parent of an adolescent with autism, I am intimately involved in and acutely aware of the challenges that families face with each successive school year. The PTI project at SPAN is a federally funded grant under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and every state has a similar center. The purpose of this project is to educate families about the special education laws and support them in their efforts to obtain a free, appropriate public education for their children with special needs. SPAN offers support and information by providing telephone technical assistance. Trainings are conducted throughout the state in special education law and advocacy. A variety of printed materials are available free or for a small fee and in some very limited instances, SPAN staff may accompany some parents to school meetings. These limitations are set by the requirements of the PTI grant. There is also the fact that SPAN is a statewide organization and the PTI staff cannot respond to all requests for in-person support. The intent of this grant is to provide information and assistance to families, enabling them to become effective self- advocates. Parents need to be proactive in educating themselves by learning about the special education laws at the federal, state and local level. Knowledge is empowering. Using that knowledge and learning how to navigate the special education maze is critical to the quality of your child's education.

We all know that there is strength in numbers. However, it takes just one person to take the initiative and go forward with the belief that they can make a difference. Others will follow and want to become involved.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is up for reauthorization. Every five years Congress has the job of revisiting this law and amending it. Unfortunately, many times these amendments are detrimental to children and youth with disabilities and threaten the rights that disability organizations have long fought for. It is up to us to continue the fight and be vigilant in the coming months to protect all the components of IDEA intended to provide our children with as good an education as their non-disabled peers. Take a proactive role in this reauthorization (see page 6). Stay tuned for action alerts from SPAN and information that will be posted on our website and through mailings. Following is a story that you may have read, about an old man and a boy and starfish. A friend of mine made me aware of it and ever since, I've "adopted" the story and the starfish symbol as a way of remembering and promoting its message, which is a message of hope, optimism and determination. The knowledge that even one person can really make a difference in the life of an individual is truly empowering!

This article is dedicated to the memory of Justin Dart who made individual advocacy his mission in life. He was instrumental in the passage of the American with Disabilities Act. His influence and presence in the disability community will be greatly missed.

Resource Centers

Atlantic
Atlantic & Cape May Counties

Bergen
Bergen & Hudson Counties

Burlington (BEAM)
Burlington & Camden Counties

Essex
Suburban Essex County

Hudson
Hudson County

Hunterdon
Hunterdon & Warren Counties

Monmouth
Monmouth & Ocean Counties

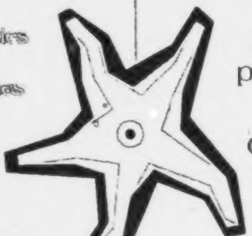
Middlesex
Middlesex County

Union
Union County

Northwest
Sussex & Some Morris County

Passaic
Passaic County

(800) 654-SPAN



THE STARFISH STORY

Every day, an old man walked the beach with a pail, picking up starfish that had been washed in by the tide and throwing them back into the sea.

One day a young boy stopped the old man and asked, "Why do you throw the starfish back? It doesn't matter. They will only wash up on the shore again tomorrow."

The old man picked a starfish out of his pail, threw it as far as he could into the sea, and replied, "It mattered to this one."

Community Resource Centers

Our Community Resource Centers are staffed by trained volunteer parents who offer their time to assist other parents in need of information and support on behalf of their children with special needs. We all know how difficult it can be and how desperate we can feel as we attempt to negotiate the "special education maze." SPAN Resource Parents have the opportunity to truly make a difference and lighten the burden for many other parents.

This year we plan to establish Community Resource Centers in the following counties: Camden, Cumberland, Essex, Mercer, Ocean, Salem, Middlesex, Somerset, Hudson, Morris and Warren Counties. If you live in one of these counties and think you might be interested in becoming a SPAN Resource Parent to support a center in your area, please call or e-mail me for details.

The following "Ten Commandments" were written by Jill Simmons, a SPAN Resource Parent affiliated with the Essex County Resource Center. In addition to being a resource parent, Jill has recently become president of GRASE (Glen Ridge Association for Special Education). Jill's passion and understanding of advocacy and collaboration will serve her well in her new position. Congratulations, Jill!

As parents of children with special needs, I believe we bear certain responsibilities in this journey of our children's lives, the shouldering of which make it possible to be collaborative instead of combative. I view these responsibilities as:

The Ten Commandments

for parents of children with special needs

1. Understand fully and be able to communicate the complexities of my child's disability;
2. Celebrate, rejoice in, and be able to communicate my child's strengths and abilities;
3. Understand as fully as possible the special education laws and codes for the State of New Jersey and our nation at large;
4. Understand the responsibilities of the school, the responsibilities of our family, and how they complement and support each other;
5. Have the courage and grace to say thank you to all those who touch my child's life;
6. Have the courage to say *with grace and tact* "this is not working for my child" and offer solutions;
7. Make the time to forge new relationships each September and continue to nurture them throughout the school year;
8. Be willing to let my child stumble in the struggle to meet new challenges;
9. Advocate for my whole child, letting his strengths drive his program as well as his disabilities, even when it means moving out of the "safety zone";
10. Look to the future with an open mind, trusting that if we challenge and support in balanced proportions, my child will go places none of us could predict or plan for today.

Jill Simmons

Make a Difference

Become a SPAN Resource Parent

This program is designed to train individuals to assist parents of children with disabilities and special health needs in understanding their rights and responsibilities under federal and state laws and obtaining appropriate educational programs and related services for their children.

Qualifications

Completed a SPAN Basic Rights training
Ability to provide 5 hours per month of volunteer time
Interest in working with parents of children with disabilities or special health needs
Good interpersonal skills

Follow-up training and technical assistance provided. In return for the training, a commitment of 5 hours per month for one year as a SPAN volunteer is requested.

Volunteer Activities

Responding to parent inquiries about the nature of a disabling condition and resources in the community
Providing parents with information about their legal rights
Giving parents an understanding of the special education process
Assisting parents in preparation of IEP meetings
When appropriate, supporting parents at IEP meetings
Supporting parents in mediating conflicts
Assisting parents in organizing parent support groups

Training Curriculum

Federal and State laws and regulations
Development of the Individualized Education Program (IEP)
Least Restrictive Environment
Conflict Resolution (Avoiding or Preparing for Due Process)

Ongoing Education Topics

Positive Behavioral Supports
Early Intervention
Transition to Adult Life
Creating Effective Schools
Parent Participation in School Reform
Assessment
Individual and Systems Advocacy
Parent/Professional Partnership

For More Information

Penny Dragonetti
Northern Training Coordinator
Middlesex County & North
(973) 509-9777 x121
pdragonetti@spannj.org

Peg Kinsell
Southern Training Coordinator
Middlesex County & South
(609) 893-5177
pkinsell@spannj.org

What's Happening at SPAN

New Jersey Inclusive Child Care Project
Conference 2002

It is with great joy that I take you along on a brief look back at the New Jersey Inclusive Child Care Project Conference 2002 this past spring. For my staff and for everyone with the vision of inclusion who took part in the day, it was a success in many ways. After months of planning, the project's efforts seemed to have paid off: the conference was an enjoyable and informative day for all.

Almost 200 child care providers and others came out to the event at the Holiday Inn in Somerset, New Jersey. They participated in a variety of workshops and enjoyed lunch with others sharing the vision of inclusion from across the state.

Ron McGuckin was our keynote speaker, presenting in an entertaining and informative style about the legal issues that providers can encounter.

The day's workshops included: *Success in Autism: A Parent's View*, *Developing Sensory Integration Through Ordinary Activity*, *Observing and Recording*, *Making Inclusion Happen*, *Working with Children with ADHD in Inclusive Early Childhood Settings*, *Puppets in the Classroom: Effective Teaching Tools*, *Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners*, and *Day Care Accessibility under the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination*.

All of the topic areas seemed popular with the participants and the workshops were well attended. In fact, one workshop entitled *Challenging Behaviors* posed a true challenge to those 99 who chose to attend, as the room only accommodated 80!

Child care providers and others were all inspired by the significant turnout and the informative, applicable workshops. Visitors raved about the materials, the speakers and the connections they had made with others in their field.

If you think that you or anyone you know might benefit from next year's conference, or the resources we at the New Jersey Inclusive Child Care Project can provide, please let us know. You can find more information on the project on SPAN's website at *www.spannj.org* or by calling us directly at (800) 654-7726 x108.

As director of the New Jersey Inclusive Child Care Project, I am very pleased with the results of the conference and proud of the project's success. My staff and I look forward to planning our next conference to be held on May 10, 2003. We hope to see you there!

Best wishes,

Sue

Sue Merrill

New Jersey Inclusive Child Care Project
Sue Merrill, Project Director

35 Halsey Street, 4th Fl, Newark, NJ 07102
Toll free in NJ: (800) 654-SPAN (7726) x108
E-mail: childcare@spannj.org
Website: www.spannj.org

Parents As Teachers

Robin Soll, Project Coordinator

The Parents As Teachers program is strengthening the knowledge, skills and abilities of the parents of sixty migrant families in Bridgeton. Parents and their infants and toddlers have the opportunity to participate in one of the most successful early childhood programs, Parents As Teachers (PAT).

This voluntary program, free to any expectant parent or those with a child from newborn to three, provides parents with the information and support they need to give their child the best possible start in life. PAT is based on the philosophy that parents are the most influential teachers.

Parents As Teachers programs include personal visits by professionally trained child development specialist, free developmental screenings, group meetings and a variety of child rearing topics, and finding a variety of other resources beyond the scope of the PAT program. The goal is to help parents learn new ways to foster growth, curiosity, and social skills.

The Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Inc. is collaborating with Tri-County Action Agency and Rural Opportunities, Inc. to deliver the PAT program. There is a need for social service agencies to work with the growing Mexican community in Cumberland County, New Jersey, says Tri-County's communication director.

Rural Opportunities provides services for farmworkers, low-income families and economically depressed communities in Southern New Jersey. The Statewide Parent Advocacy Network provides training and supervision for Parents As Teachers representatives of these agencies. We are excited about this successful collaboration!

Parents As Teachers

Robin Soll, Program Coordinator

c/o NJPIRC
140 East Hanover Street, Room 302/306
Trenton, NJ 08608

Phone (609) 394-5900
Fax (609) 394-6553
E-mail robin.soll@spannj.org

Transition to Adult Life

What is transition?

Transition is the process that prepares students for adult life after high school. Starting at age 14 (by the day your child turns 14) there needs to be a statement of transition service needs. This is the long-range educational plan that ensures students take the appropriate classes in high school. It prepares them either for college or for the world of work, depending on the interests and wishes of the student and his/her parents.

There must be a transition statement (long range goal) in the IEP, based on the student's preference, and it must take into consideration the student's needs and desires. In other words, the IEP should now focus on what your child wants in adult life. Starting at age 16, or younger if appropriate, there needs to be a statement of needed transition services.

This is a much broader plan and includes areas of instruction, employment, community experiences, post-school adult living, related services, and if appropriate, daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. At least one year prior to turning 18, the IEP must address that your son or daughter will reach the age of majority and begin making IEP decisions for him/herself.

Transition is based on long-range outcomes, not annual goals.

It is critical to start with transition planning at the beginning of the IEP when a student is 14 or older. Transition should become the strategy that guides the rest of the IEP. Students are required to be invited to their IEP meeting if transition will be discussed.

Transition to Adult Life Project

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Alice Hunnicutt
(800) 654-SPAN x103
transition@spannj.org
www.spannj.org

Parents Place

Club de Padres

A place where parents learn about their children's education

26 DeGrasse Street
Paterson, NJ 07505

Parents are their children's first and best teachers. They play a powerful role in making sure their children receive a quality education.

Our workshops give parents and families an opportunity to learn more about raising and educating their children with and without disabilities:

Parents' Rights Under IDEA
(Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)

The IEP Process

Parents Are Powerful:
Promoting Family Involvement in Education

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Extended School Year Services

How to be Heard and Understood

Preschool Programs & Inclusion

Transition Planning and the IEP

Challenging Behavior:
Understanding Functional Behavioral Assessment

Organizing Parent Support Groups
Paterson Parents United or Special Parents of Special Education

Call us for a schedule of workshops!

(973) 523-8404

Rose Kardashian, M.S., Director
ext. 41

Zina Seaborn,
Parent Resource Specialist
ext. 48

Hilda Maldonado, Resource Parent
ext. 47

Parents are the most important influence in their children's lives.

In partnership with
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network

Working with
Department of Special Services
Paterson Public Schools

Hello! My name is Gloria Oquendo. My daughter, Estefania, is seven years old. She was born without any hearing. Estefania was implanted with a cochlear implant in her right ear at the age of three in our native country, Colombia, South America.

My family arrived in the United States from Colombia in July 2000. In September of that year I registered Estefania in kindergarten, since she was five years old. We live in Paterson. After having Estefania evaluated, the child study team determined that Dale Avenue School had the most appropriate program for Estefania. Since I was new to this system, I decided to try out the program. Estefania spent her first year in the United States in a regular kindergarten class with a few hours a week of in-class monitoring by a person who had some basic knowledge of cochlear implants. At the end of the school year, I felt that Estefania had not made the progress I had hoped for. The child study team said that was the only program they had available to Estefania and recommended that she remain in the same class with the same few hours a week of hearing and speech support.

I learned from a friend that Catholic Family & Community Services had a center called Parents Place/Club de Padres, where I could talk to a specialist about IDEA. I was so thankful that everyone there spoke Spanish **and** English and that there were parents of children with disabilities with whom I could talk. I was given the law, and told what options I had. I chose to ask for an evaluation with a specialist in cochlear implants. The Parents Place/Club de Padres provided me with an advocate who served also as a translator for Estefania's and my visit with Dr. Machito, a cochlear implant specialist at Overlook Hospital. It was through my encounter with Dr. Machito that I learned about a class dedicated to closely monitoring cochlear implant children. I learned that children who are implanted need to learn how to distinguish sounds and a specialist has to constantly evaluate what they are hearing. The day in a class dedicated to teaching children with cochlear implants is filled with many hours of "charting" what each child is learning. I also learned that the room needs to be fully sound proof so as to cancel out any extra sounds. That meant having special drapes and rugs that are placed in the class to absorb extemporaneous sounds.

When I requested that school, the child study team did not agree with me. My advocate from The Parents Place/Club de Padres accompanied me to my second IEP meeting where I made request again and they flatly said no. I said, "All I want is for Estefania to learn the most possible. She can't do that in this program." They said, "We feel this is an appropriate program for her."

My advocate gave me more options. I chose to exercise my rights for due process. My advocate referred my case to the Educational Law Center because she said that I would need to have an expert opinion and perhaps the ELC could help me with that. I met with David, an attorney from ELC in December of 2001. He agreed to represent me in my hearing against the Paterson Public Schools and he spoke Spanish! He explained the legal process to me, step by step. We worked long and hard to reclaim my daughter's rights so that she would benefit from a "thorough and efficient education" which meant proper cochlear implant listening monitoring.

In spite of all the obstacles along the way, I can safely say that the struggle was worthwhile. With the ongoing assistance of both the Parents Place/Club de Padres and the Educational Law Center, my daughter is now in a program specifically designed to help children with cochlear implants. She attended summer classes there and has made marked progress already. She is looking forward to her new school year.

My husband and my daughter Laura have always inspired me with their love and dedication to Estefania. That support is what has always inspired me to strive to set high expectations for Estefania. I am certain that my daughter Estefania will continue to improve and progress in her academics and life skills now that the path chosen for her is the right one.

I would like to thank everyone who extended their hand to help me on this journey, step by step. I would like to tell all the parents who are reading this... trust your instincts. Follow your dreams for your children and find people like that ones I found to help get you there.

MULTI-LINGUAL CENTER CATHOLIC FAMILY & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Parents Place

Club de Padres

Hola! Mi nombre es Gloria Oquendo. Mi hija, Estefania tiene siete anos de edad. Ella nació sorda. A los tres anos de edad Estefania tuvo una cirugia de implante "cochlear" en el oido derecho, en su tierra natal de Colombia.

Mi familia y yo llegamos a los Estados Unidos en julio del 2000. En septiembre de es ano matricule a Estefania en el jardín de niños a los cinco anos. Vivimos en Paterson. Después de evaluarla, el personal del equipo de educacion especial para niños decidió que la escuela de Dale Avenue era la más apropiada para Estefania. Yo era nueva al sistema, decide a tentar el programa. Estefanía duro su primer ano en los Estados Unidos en una clase regular en el jardín de niños con unas horas a la semana in una clase donde fue supervisada por personas que tenían un conocimiento con implantes de cochlear. Al fin del ano ve que Estefania no avanzo como yo esperaba. El personal del programa especial para niños dijeron que este era el único programa que tenian para Estefania y recomendaron que continuara en la misma clase con las mismas horas a la semana de apoyó en audición y lenguaje.

Me informe de un amigo sobre la agencia Catholic Family & Community Services tenia un centro llamado Parents Place/ Club de Padres, donde puedo ir y hablar con un especialista sobre IDEA. Estaba muy agradecida que todos allí hablaban español y ingles, y había padres con niños con desabilidades, con los que yo pueda hablar. Me dieron las leyes, y mis opciones. Decidí pedir una evaluación con un especialista en implantes de cochlear. El Parents Place/ Club de Padres me apunto una persona para que me asistiera y traducirá a Estefania y a mi a la cita con Dr. Jennifer Marchitto, una especialista de implantes de cochlear, en el hospital Overlook. Era el encuentro con la doctora Jennifer Marchitto, que aprende de la escuela dedicada a la supervisión de niños con implantes de cochlear. Aprende que niños con implantes necesitan aprender como distinguir sonidos y un especialista tiene que evaluar constantemente lo que están oyendo. Un día de clase dedicada a enseñar a niños con implantes de cochlear, esta lleno de muchas horas de "planear" que cada niño esta aprendiendo. También aprende que el salón necesita que impedir sonidos para cancelar cualquier otro sonido. Eso significo que tenían que tener cortinas y alfombra especiales in la clase para absorber sonidos improvisados.

Cuando solicite esa escuela, el personal del programa especial para niños no estuvo de acuerdo con migo. Mi asistente de Parents Place/ Club de Padres, me acompaño a mi segunda junta de IEP donde soliste otra vez y ellos dijeron que no. Yo dije, "Todo lo que quiero es que Estefania aprenda todo lo posible. Ella no puede en este programa." Ellos dijeron, "Nosotros sentimos que este es un programa apropiado para ella."

Mi asistente me dio más opciones y me explicaron las leyes en una manera que yo comprendi bien mis derechos. Escogí a mis derechos de pedir cita con en el corte. Ella me refirió mi caso a la Educational Law Center por que ella me dijo que tenia que tener una opinión de un experto y aló mejor ELC pueda ayudarme con eso. Me senti con David, un abogado de ELC in diciembre del 2001. El estuvo de acuerdo para representar me ante el Distrito de Paterson, y el equipo de la escuela, y hablo español. El me explico el proceso de las leyes, paso a paso. Trabajamos largo y duro para reclamar los derechos de mi hija para que ella tuviera los beneficios de una educación eficiente, esto significó una instrucion apropiada para implantes de cochlear.

Aunque hubo muchos obstáculos durante el camino, puedo decir que todo mi sacrificio valió la pena. Con la asistencia de Parents Place/ Club de Padres y la Educational Law Center, mi hija ahora esta en un programa especificamente designando al la ayuda de niños con implantes de cochlear. Ella atiende escuela de verano y a hecho progreso. Esta esperando a un nuevo ano de escuela.

Mi esposo e hija Laura siempre me han inspirado con su amor y dedicación a Estefanía. Esa inspiración es lo que siempre me ha esforzado a establecer esperanzas para Estefanía. Estoy segura que mi hija Estefania continuará a mejorar y progresar en su academia y en la vida por el curso que escoge para ella, que es el mejor.

Me gustária agrádeser a todos quien extendieron su mano para ayudarme en este camino, paso a paso. Me gustaria decirles a todos los padres que están leyendo esto...confía en su instinto. Siga sus sueños para sus hijos y encuentre personas como las que encontré yo para ayudarle a llegar allí.

El sitio donde los padres pueden aprender sobre la educación de sus niños

26 DeGrasse Street
Paterson, NJ 07505

Nosotros sabemos que los padres son los primeros y mejores profesores, y que juegan el rol mas poderoso para asegurarse que ses niños reciban un educación calidad.

Los Derechos De los Padres Bajo IDEA (El Acta de Educación para Individuos con Desabilidades)

El Proceso del IEP

Padres Ustedes Son Poderosos
Promoviendo el Envolvimiento de las familias en la Educación

Sección 504 del Acta Rehabilitadad

Servicios de Extensión de Año Escolar

Como ser Eschuchado y Entendido

La Inclusión y los Programa Preescolares

Los Planes de Transición y el IEP

Comportamiento Desafiante:
Entendiendo el funcionamiento de las evaluaciones

Organizando Grupos de Apoyo Para Padres
Padres de Paterson Unidos o Padres Especiales de Niños Especiales

Llámenos para los horarios de los talleres!

(973) 523-8404

Rose Kardashian, M.S., Director
ext. 41

Zina Seaborn,
Parent Resource Specialist
ext. 48

Hilda Maldonado, Resource Parent
ext. 47

Padres ustedes son la influencia más importante en la vida de sus niños.

En colaboración con la
Cadena de Padres Defensores a lo Largo del Estado

MULTI-LINGUAL CENTER CATHOLIC FAMILY & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Preventing and Resolving Parent-Teacher Differences

Parents and teachers share responsibility for creating a working relationship that fosters children's learning. This digest examines the cultural context for parent-teacher relationships, suggests some general strategies for creating a climate in which misunderstandings and disagreements between parents and teachers can be minimized through communication, and discusses some general principles for parents and teachers in dealing with misunderstandings or disagreements as they arise.

The Cultural Context for Parent-Teacher Relationships

It is important for teachers and parents to remember that they know the child in different contexts, and that each may be unaware of what the child is like in the other context. It is also useful to keep in mind generally that different people often have distinct but disparate perspectives on the same issue.

For many parents, a fundamental part of the parenting role is to be their child's strongest advocate with the teacher and the school (Katz, 1995). Other parents, however, may be reluctant to express their concerns because of cultural beliefs related to the authoritative position of the teacher. Others may have difficulty talking with teachers as a result of memories of their own school years, or they may be unsure of how to express their concerns to teachers. A few parents may fear that questions or criticism will put their child at a disadvantage in school.

Many parents may be surprised to learn that teachers, especially new teachers, are sometimes equally anxious about encounters with parents. Most teachers receive very little training in fostering parent-teacher relationships, but with the growing understanding of the importance of parent involvement, they may worry about doing everything they can to encourage parents to feel welcome (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991).

Avoiding Conflicts between Parents and Teachers through Open, Ongoing Communication

The foundation for good parent-teacher relationships is frequent and open communication. Both teachers and parents share the responsibility for creating such a foundation. There are several strategies teachers can use to establish a climate conducive to open communication. Teachers can:

Let Parents Know How and When They Can Contact the School and the Teacher.

As early in the school year as possible, teachers can explain that: (1) they can be reached at specific times or in specific ways; (2) they can be contacted directly as questions or concerns arise; and (3) they have given a lot of thought to their teaching philosophy, class rules, and expectations. In addition to personal interaction, teachers often use newsletters or letters home to provide this information to parents, perhaps including a phone number and, if available, an electronic mail address by which they can be contacted (Barnett, 1995). Some teachers encourage two-way communication by including in newsletters or letters home a short survey about children's interests or parents' hopes or expectations for the school year.

Practice an Open-Door, Open-Mind Policy.

Teachers can invite parents to visit the class at any time that is convenient to the parent. When they visit, parents can monitor their child's perceptions of a situation and see for them selves what the teacher is trying to achieve with his or her students.

Elicit Expressions of Parents' Concerns and Interests in Preparation for Parent-Teacher Conferences.

Some schools organize parent-teacher meetings to discuss their goals early in the school year. On these occasions, teachers can ask parents to share their main concerns and goals for their child. Brief questionnaires and interest surveys also provide good bases for meaningful discussions in parent-teacher conferences (Nielsen & Finkelstein, 1993).

Involve Parents in Classroom Activities.

Teachers can let parents know how they can be helpful and solicit parents' assistance with specific activities. The more involved parents are in what goes on in the classroom, the more likely they are to understand the teacher's goals and practices.

Parents also have an important role to play in fostering open communication between themselves and teachers. They can:

Introduce Themselves.

At the beginning of the school year, parents can contact teachers and let them know when they can be reached most easily, daytime or evening, to discuss their child's classroom experience, and how they would prefer to be contacted (telephone, email, letter, etc.).

Be Involved in Classroom and School Activities at Whatever Level Work and Family Responsibilities Allow.

If parents cannot volunteer or go on field trips, they can let the teacher know that they are interested in helping in other ways with a special display or some activity that can be done on an occasional weekend, for example.

(Continued on page 21)

(Continued from page 20)

They can let the teacher know that they have skills that they would be willing to share even if they are not sure how they can be useful in the classroom. Or, they can let the teacher know that special circumstances (an extremely ill parent, or an especially demanding job, for example) prevent them from being formally involved, but that they are always interested in how their child is doing and would welcome communications about their child on a regular basis, not just when there's a problem.

Initiate Regular Contact.

Parents need not wait for the teacher to call them; they can contact the teacher at times the teacher has indicated are convenient.

When Parents and Teachers Disagree: Strategies for Teachers and Parents

On those inevitable occasions when parents and teachers disagree about curriculum, assignments, peer relationships, homework, or teaching approaches, a pattern of open communication can be invaluable for resolving differences (Willis, 1995). But dealing with direct disagreements also requires respect and discretion by both parents and teachers. In times of disagreement, teachers should:

Know the School Policy for Addressing Parent-Teacher Disagreements.

It is a good idea for teachers to check school and district policies for handling conflicts or disagreements with parents and to follow the procedures outlined in the policies.

Use Discretion about When and Where Children and their Families are Discussed.

It is important to resist the frequent temptations to discuss individual children and their families in inappropriate public and social situations or to discuss particular children with the parents of other children. Confidentiality contributes to maintaining trust between parents and teachers.

Parents' discussions of disagreements with teachers need to be based on knowing the facts. Parents can:

Talk Directly with the Teacher about the Problem.

The best approach is to address complaints at first directly to the teacher, either in person or by telephone, and then to other school personnel in the order specified by school policy. Sometimes the teacher is unaware of the child's difficulty or perception of a situation. Sometimes a child misunderstands a teacher's intentions, or the teacher is unaware of the child's confusion about a rule or an assignment. It is important to check the facts directly with the teacher before drawing conclusions or allocating blame. Direct contact is necessary to define the problem accurately and to develop an agreement about how best to proceed.

Avoid Criticizing Teachers in Front of Children.

Criticizing teachers and schools in front of children may confuse them. Even very young children can pick up disdain or frustration that parents express about their children's school experiences. In the case of the youngest children, it is not unusual for them to attribute heroic qualities to their teachers. Some even think that the teacher lives at school and thinks of no one but them. Eventually such naivete is outgrown, but overheard criticism is likely to be confusing in the early years and may put a child in a bind over divided loyalties. Besides causing confusion and conflict, criticizing the teacher in front of the child does nothing to address the problem. In the case of older children, such criticism may foster arrogance, defiance, and rudeness toward teachers. Children's respect for authority figures is generally a shared goal in most cultures (Katz, 1996).

Choose an Appropriate Time and Place to Discuss the Disagreement.

Parents should keep in mind that the end of the day, when both teachers and parents are tired, is probably not the best time for a discussion involving strong feelings. If an extended discussion is needed, make an appointment with the teacher.

As children grow older, they are generally aware when their parents are upset about the teacher or a school-related problem. As parents discuss these incidents with their children, they are modeling ways to express frustration with the problems of life in group settings. As children observe and then practice these skills, the coping skills become "tools" in a child's "psychological pocket" to be used in future life experiences.

Conclusion

Teachers and parents share responsibility for the education and socialization of children. Preventing and resolving the differences that may arise between parents, teachers, and children with constructive communication, respect, grace, and good humor can help make school a pleasant place.

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This publication was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, USDOE, under OERI contract no. RR93002007. The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI or the Department of Education. ERIC digest are in the public domain and may be freely reproduced and disseminated.

Parents Can Play a Part in Raising Teacher Quality

Peggy Patton, adapted from a November/December 2001 online Parent News *article* (http://npin.org/pnews/2001/pnew1101/int1101d.html)

One of the few points of universal agreement in education is that having highly qualified teaching matters. But recent demands for better-qualified teachers are coming at a time of severe teacher shortages and increasing numbers of students.

One thing will not change: the role of parents in supporting both new and experienced teachers. Just as parent involvement helps children succeed in school, it can also help teachers be more successful in the classroom.

Some award-winning first-year teachers attributed some of their success to parents who:

- showed support for learning at home;
- communicated positive feedback about a teacher's influence or performance;
- welcomed new teachers;
- volunteered to help in the classroom;
- supported fair discipline measures that teachers imposed;
- did not assume the worst about first-year teachers;
- made sure that children did their homework;
- offered their workplaces for field trips, when appropriate;
- talked to a teacher directly about a problem; and
- became active partners in education.

Parents can also work to promote teaching as a profession and to ensure that their schools hire well-trained teachers.

- See how your state teaching standards measure up. See *www.hewittco.com/nasdtec/online_1.html* for state-by-state information.
- Start a future teachers club. Work with middle school and high school administrators and teachers to start a local chapter of Future Educators of America (*www.pdkintl.org/studser/sfea.htm*).
- Encourage your local schools to establish partnerships with nearby schools of education. Teacher input to university faculty keeps education schools focused on the day-to-day issues that teachers face.

Given the projections about the number of new teachers needed in our nation's classrooms in the next few years, parents will have ample opportunity to forge partnerships with new teachers, with schools, and with community groups to help ensure that all children have access to effective classroom teachers.

Grandparents Need to Know How to Help

Reprinted from Early Childhood Connection, *Spring 2002, newsletter of PACER Center, 8161 Normandale Boulevard, Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044*
952-838-9000 • 952-838-0190 (TTY) • pacer@pacer.org • www.pacer.org

Parents may wish to share or adapt these tips for grandparents who want to help.

Offer support, but don't hover. By doing so, your child will know you trust their decisions about medication, therapy, education, etc.

Provide support in practical ways. Open communication is important. Ask what you can do to help. You can attend doctors' appointments for moral support and an extra set of ears and notes, or babysit to allow your children to relax one evening a week. Even if you live far away, you can help by locating therapists in your grandchild's city and fording useful books or other information.

Offer opinions only if asked. Some parents might be sensitive about suggestions for raising their child. Try to understand that raising a child with a disability is difficult and give advice only when your child asks for it. "Sometimes my parents say things that sound as if they think we aren't doing things right," said a mother. "For example, my child has difficulty eating. But my mother has said, 'She does just fine when she's with me.' That might have been Mom trying to reassure me, but that's not how I heard it."

Find out what you need to know about the disability. If you become informed about a child's disability, it indicates that you really want to be involved. However, follow the lead of your children; they have gathered plenty of information and have the information they need to raise their child. Before you offer new information, wait until they ask.

Accept your grandchild as he or she is. Treat the child with a disability as you would any grandchild. Acknowledge the disability, but recognize the talents and abilities of your grandchild.

Give yourself time to grieve. Many grandparents say their grief is magnified because they watch their child grieving also. Let yourself grieve and take care of yourself during difficult times.

Enjoy your grandchild. If you enjoy reading to your grandchild, sit on the couch and read a book - even if the doctor says the child can't hear. Rock your grandchild in your favorite rocking chair. Bring pictures of your grandchild to your friends. Spend time together - you will quickly learn all of the talents and abilities your grandchild has and the important place you have in his or her life.

Communication: The Key to Successful Collaboration Between Schools & Mental Health

Written by Tina Deibler, an emotional support teacher in the Cumberland Valley School District, Cumberland County, PA.

In my position as an itinerant emotional support teacher in the public education system, I have had the opportunity to collaborate with a variety of mental health staff persons and agencies on behalf of children with mental health needs. Most of my experiences have been positive, although some collaborative efforts have not been successful.

I believe that the key to successful collaboration between the school and mental health agencies is open communication. Team members must constantly exchange information. It is also important to remember that, next to the parents, the educational system has the child for the most hours on any given day.

Open communication can happen in different ways between the educational team, the family and all the outside agencies and staff who are involved with individual children:

- Clear documentation of all of the expectations for a student in the educational environment. This documentation can help with developing the child's education plan, ease transitions, and help the child to be more successful.

- Educational materials and information about a child's disability. This information can be shared during Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings and CASSP (Child and Adolescent Service System Program) meetings.
- Collection and sharing of data about a child, so that an appropriate IEP can be developed.

One of my most successful cases of collaboration and communication involved Sarah, who needed treatment and services in keeping with the requirements of the Cordero court settlement for students who did not have an appropriate educational placement. The school district supplied a teacher and a classroom aide, while the mental health agency provided a case manager, behavioral specialist, and therapeutic staff support worker. In addition, there were advocates, lawyers and multiple administrators involved. Team meetings often included more than 20 people.

For me as an educator, it was hard to have so many adult professionals in my classroom, but everyone was there to play a specific role and to support Sarah. Team members all supported each other and gave suggestions; with so many people involved, many strategies were available. Someone not involved on a daily basis was usually available to visit the class and provide insight or share observations. Although eventually Sarah went to a residential placement, our team successfully enabled her to stay at home and in a regular education setting for an extended time. If the team members had not openly communicated with each other, the outcome for Sarah would have been even less successful.

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Helping Hand

Questions Parents Ask About Schools

Excerpted from Questions Parents Ask About Schools, *U.S. Department of Education*

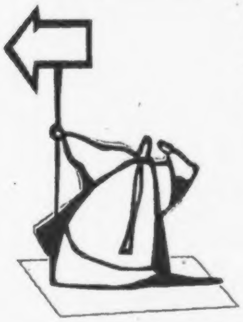
On Preparing for a Career

What can I do to help my child move successfully from school to college or work?

- Start talking to your children at an early age about careers and the kind of education he or she will need to reach his or her goals. Expose your children to many different careers through contacts with teachers, friends, employers, and career counselors.
- Encourage your child to attend career and college fairs. Attend as many of these events as you can with your child. Most future jobs require not only a high school diploma, but 1-4 years of community college, 4 years of college, and/or specialty training.
- Take your child to work if you can.
- Ask the high school counselor about programs that combine study at school with work or classes at the technical college to prepare students for well-paying jobs (sometimes these programs are called Tech-Prep, School-to-Career, or School-to-Work).
- Make sure your child is enrolled in the high school courses needed for admission to college or to secure a well-paying job.
- Make sure your child takes the tests, starting not later than 9th grade, that many colleges review as part of the admissions process. Students who take these tests more than once usually improve their scores.
- Encourage your child to be involved in activities such as organized after-school programs, community service, academic clubs, technology or vocational clubs, the school newspaper, drama and music programs, art, and athletics.
- Relate your child's interests to a variety of career choices.

What high school courses should my child take to get into college?

- A college education builds on the knowledge and skills acquired in earlier years. Parents should plan with their children, starting not later that 7th or 8th grade, to make sure they can complete all the appropriate middle and high school courses needed for college admission, beginning with plans to take algebra in the 8th grade.



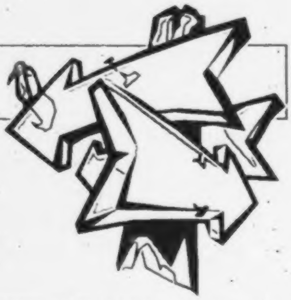
- Students usually have more difficulty with college courses if they haven't taken courses to prepare them in high school.
- Academic requirements differ among colleges, but the admissions requirements listed below are typical of four-year colleges:

  4 years of English (grammar and composition, American literature, English literature, world literature)
  3 to 4 years of mathematics (algebra I and II, geometry, trigonometry, pre-calculus, calculus)
  2 to 3 years of history and geography
  3 to 4 years of laboratory science (biology, chemistry, physics)
  2 to 3 years of foreign language
  1 year of the visual and performing arts
  1 to 3 years of appropriate electives (computer science)

These questions and answers were prepared by staff from Parent Information and Resource Centers across the United States, funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Survey results are from a survey sponsored by the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, the U.S. Department of Education, and the GTE Foundation, conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago as well as "Fathers' Involvement in Their Children's Schools," a survey by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Las Preguntas Que Hacen Los Padres Sobre La Escuela

U.S. Department of Education (excerpt)



Al Prepararse Para una Carrera

Qué pueden hacer los padres para ayudar a los hijos a realizar con éxito la transición de la escuela a la universidad o al trabajo?

- Comience a hablar con sus hijos acerca de las carreras y del tipo de educación que necesitarán para lograr sus objetivos desde una edad temprana. Exponga a su hijo a las distintas carreras poniéndolo en contacto con maestras, amigos, empleadores y consejeros vocacionales.
- Aliente a su hijo a que asista a ferias de reclutamiento de empleadores y de universidades. Asista a todas las actividades de este tipo que pueda con su hijo. La mayoría de los futuros trabajos requerirá no solo un diploma de escuela secundaria sino también, 1 a 4 años de universidad comunitaria, 4 años de universidad y/o capacitación especial.
- Si puede, lleve a su hijo al lugar en donde trabaja.
- Pregunte al consejero de la escuela secundaria acerca de programas que combinen el estudio en la escuela con el trabajo o acerca de clases en una universidad técnica que preparen a los estudiantes para trabajos que pagan bien (estos programas reciben a veces el nombre de preparatorias técnicas (Tech-Prep), escuela a carrera (School-to-Career) o escuela a trabajo (School-to-Work).
- Compruebe que su hijo se haya inscrito en los cursos de escuela secundaria que necesita para ser admitido a la universidad o para conseguir un trabajo que paga bien.
- Compruebe que su hijo haya realizado las pruebas (que comienzan a más tardar a partir del 9no, grado) que muchas de las universidades solicitan como parte del proceso de admisión. Los estudiantes que hacen estas pruebas más de una vez, en general mejoran la calificación obtenida.
- Aliente a su hijo a que participe en actividades tales como programas organizados después del día escolar, el servicio comunitario, los clubes académicos, los clubes tecnológicos o vocacionales, el periódico de la escuela, los programas de teatro, música, arte y atléticos.
- Relacione los intereses de su hijo con una variedad de posibilidades de carreras.

En qué clases de la escuela secundaria debe inscribirse mi hijo para poder ir a la universidad?

- La educación de la universidad se basa en el conocimiento y las aptitudes adquiridos durante los años anteriores. Los padres deben comenzar a planificar la educación junto con sus hijos antes del 7mo. u 8vo. grado. Si lo hacen, podrán estar seguros de completar todos los cursos de la escuela media y superior que necesitan para ser admitidos en la universidad, comenzando con el álgebra en el 8vo. grado.
- En general, los estudiantes que no se inscriben en los cursos de preparación en la escuela superior, tienen más dificultades en la universidad.
- Los requisitos académicos dependen de la universidad pero los requisitos de admisión enumerados a continuación son los habituales de las universidades de cuatro años:
  4 años de idioma inglés (gramática y composición, literatura norteamericana, literatura inglesa, literatura mundial)
  3 a 4 años de matemáticas (álgebra I, II; geometría, trigonometría, introducción al cálculo, cálculo)
  2 a 3 años de historia y geografía
  3 a 4 años de ciencias de laboratorio (biología, química, física)
  2 a 3 años de un idioma extranjero
  1 año de artes visuales y de actuación
  1 a 3 años de materias electivas adecuadas (ciencia de la computación)

Estas preguntas y respuestas fueron preparadas por el personal de los centros de recursos y de información para padres, fundados por el Departamento de Educación de EE.UU. en todo el país. Los resultados de las encuestas provienen de encuesta auspiciada por la Asociación para la Participación de la Familia en la Educación (Partnership for Family Involvement in Education), el Departamento de Educación de EE.UU. (U.S. Department of Education) y la Fundación GTE (GTE Foundation) y fueron realizados por el Centro de Investigación de Opinión Nacional (National Opinion Research Center) de la Universidad de Chicago. La Participación de los Padres en la Escuela de sus Hijos (Fathers' Involvement in Their Children's Schools), una encuesta realizada por el Centro Nacional de Estadísticas sobre Educación (National Center for Education Statistics).

What Should Parents Know About Schools As Community Learning Centers?

Peggy Patton, adapted from a November/December 2001 online Parent News *article* (http://npin.org/pnews/2001/pnew1101/int1101d.html)

Chances are that, when you were growing up, your school's clubs, sports, and social activities played an important role in your life and in the life of your community. Today, in addition to hosting traditional student clubs and activities, many schools are open from morning to night hosting daycare, pre-kindergarten, adult, and senior learning programs as well as community-wide educational, health, social, cultural, religious, and recreational services and events. Schools used for these purposes can be referred to as community learning centers. (Other ways of expressing this concept include "full-service schools," "shared facilities," and "schools as centers of community.") [The following] explains the benefits and challenges of community learning centers, lists some examples of specific school-community alliances, offers suggestions for promoting school-community partnerships, and provides sources for more information.

What Are the Benefits?

Students, parents, and the entire community can benefit from a community learning center. Serving a broad spectrum of the community brings a better return on the community's investment in its school facilities and generates a wide range of citizen and business support for school financing. School-community alliances take a great deal of planning, cooperation, and flexibility on behalf of everyone involved, but they can result in enhanced learning, strengthened community ties, and reduced facility costs.

Community Use of Schools: Facility Design Perspectives (Fanning/Howey Associates, Inc., 1995) provides numerous examples of schools that have accommodated community use. The following testimonials are from some of the people involved with these schools:

"The more people use our schools, the more they associate with us, identify with us, and use our services and facilities, the better chance we have for enlisting the community's support when we need it." *Dr. C. Douglas Parks, Superintendent of the Aptakisic-Tripp Community Consolidated School District No. 102 in Buffalo Grove, Illinois.*

"Wilson Middle School will be heavily used by our community. We knew we wanted to be able to accommodate a lot of use, so we had two main objectives: organize the functions so that the academic wing can be closed off and people can easily come and go in the public spaces; and make sure the spaces are easy to maintain, durable, and can be cleaned up quickly." *Bill Reiter, Director of Facilities and Operations for Muncie Community Schools in Muncie, Indiana.*

"The older community members like to have a place to get together and talk that is safe. The school is a safe place. So they gather at the school and chat and have all sorts of social activities." *Dr. Betty J. Davis, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Management of the Pontiac School District in Pontiac, Michigan.*

"Our school is the cultural center for our village - a museum, a library, and a place where our children can learn about their heritage.... Community use really helps with increasing support for our facilities. Our curriculum is based on community sharing and involvement." *Sam Towarak, Assistant Superintendent of the Bering Strait School District in Unalakleet, Alaska.*

What Are the Challenges?

Most challenges are associated with increased building use. Because school spaces will be shared more often, territorial and other issues must be managed skillfully. More staff time is needed for planning, scheduling, and supervision. Liability, parking, and school safety issues have to be addressed. Cleaning and maintenance are more costly, and wear and tear on buildings and equipment increases. But the same problems present themselves daily in schools now, so these issues are nothing new. The cost of adding each new activity is usually quite low and sometimes can be recovered through user fees.

Some community members may not agree that school facilities should be used by private groups and organizations. This problem is best addressed by instituting clear and fair policies and user fees developed openly and with the community's input.

What Are Some Examples of School-Community Alliances?

School districts are forming alliances with public libraries, social service offices, community recreation departments, corporate training facilities, and similar entities to put their activities under the same roof with schools. Some districts have taken school activities out of the school building altogether and distributed them among specialized "learning environments" within the community with excellent results. The famous Zoo School outside of Minneapolis, Minnesota, for instance, is actually located in the state zoo.

The following are examples of specific

school-community alliances:

Public libraries and public schools. Wisconsin has implemented a program in some communities whereby school and public library resources are housed in the same building, and services are provided by the same staff.

Social service agencies and public schools. The Children's Aid Society in New York City has implemented a community school model by using the school building to link parents and children to comprehensive social services, including afterschool care, dental services, and mental health counseling.

Recreation departments and public schools. The school system in Clayton, Missouri, and the city of Clayton combined plans and resources to upgrade the high school athletic facility. The high school now has a new athletic facility that the city can use as a new community center. In St. Paul, Minnesota, a charter school shares space with a city recreation building that was formerly used primarily after school and on weekends.

Universities and public schools. George Washington University in Washington, DC, gives students at the School Without Walls High School access to its library and to 100 university classes per year to supplement the public school's offerings. In return, the university uses the school's building for evening classes. In Arizona, two charter schools share space with a community college, thus allowing students to take both high school and college classes.

Businesses and public schools. In the Birmingham Public School System in Michigan, an underused high school was transformed into a combination 1,000-student high school and a corporate training and conference center. This has provided the business community with an asset and the high school students with access to state-of-the-art technology. In other cities, businesses have provided onsite space for use by local schools.

What Can I Do To Promote Community Use of My Child's School?

If you have an idea about a new use for your child's school or for an innovative alliance between your child's school and another organization, talk to school and community leaders. Your idea could be anything from using school facilities for an afterschool care program to building a new auditorium for joint school and community use or even starting a school in a zoo!

Implementing your idea can involve a few hours of work or years of fund-raising. The following are some specific steps you can take to promote community use of your child's school:

Meet with legislators, city and county officials, and other elected leaders to request their support in promoting the use of local schools as community learning centers.

Serve on an advisory or building committee, or pass along your ideas to members of the committee.

Attend public hearings.

Seek opportunities to encourage community use of your child's school. For example, you can speak at meetings or other community gathering places and provide examples of successful community learning centers.

Participate in community forums, planning workshops, and design sessions for new schools.

Publish articles on community use of schools in your community's newsletters.

Where Can I Get More Information?

The following organizations offer information on the topic of using schools as community learning centers:

National Center for
Community Education
1017 Avon Street * Flint, MI 48503
Toll Free: 800-811-1105
Ph: 810-238-0463 * Fax: 810-238-9211
E-mail: ncce@nccenet.org
Web: www.nccenet.org

National Community
Education Association
3929 Old Lee Highway, #91-A
Fairfax, VA 22042
Ph: 703-359-8973 * Fax: 703-359-0972
E-mail: ncea@ncea.com
Web: www.ncea.com

U.S. Department of Education 21st
Century Community Learning Centers
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-6175
Ph: 202-260-0919 * Fax: 202-260-3420
E-mail: 21stCCLC@ed.gov
Web: www.ed.gov/21stcclc

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MEDICAID MANAGED CARE

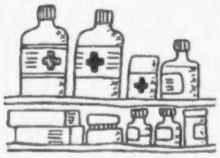
"New Jersey Care 2000+"

In a process that has already started, all Medicaid recipients in New Jersey will be phased into enrollment in state-contracted managed health care plans on a county-by-county basis.

Family Voices of New Jersey at SPAN, thanks to a grant from the Center for Health Care Strategies, has developed fact sheets to help you understand Medicaid Managed Care.

The 7 FREE fact sheets include:

What's Covered? What's Not?
Choosing Providers
Provider Relations and Advocacy
Dispute Resolution
Welfare, Social Security, and Medicaid
Resource List
Important Terms



Find our fact sheets on the SPAN website!

www.spannj.org

or contact

Lauren Agoratus & Beverly Bowser

Family Voices at New Jersey

(800) 372-6510

Using Medicaid Managed Care

- *Call a state-contracted Health Benefits Coordinator toll-free at 1-800-701-0710 (TTY: 1-800-701-0720) to select and enroll in one of 5 state-contracted Medicaid health plans called health maintenance organizations (HMOs).*
- *Read your HMO Member Handbook carefully.*
- *Select and work with a Primary Care Provider in your HMO.*
- *Get referrals from your Primary Care Provider for all specialists and other services.*
- *Work with the Care Manager assigned by your HMO to coordinate your child's needs and solve problems.*
- *Use only the providers in your HMO's Provider Network. Consult HMO member services or your HMO Provider Directory to find out who are network providers.*
- *Use emergency rooms only for true emergencies, not any routine care.*
- *Call your Primary Care Provider for all routine care, or urgent care during office hours.*
- *Call your HMO's 24-hour toll-free number for urgent problems after office hours.*
- *Call HMO member services with routine or billing questions.*
- *Receive "excluded" or "carve-out" services outside the HMO on a fee-for-service basis – these services are still paid for by Medicaid.*
- *In an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room!*

LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER PROJECT

Joint Training Activities for Educators and Parents

The Learning Resource Center Project is providing regional joint training activities for educators and parents. These training activities are intended to:

Enhance program development for students with disabilities

Provide critical information regarding federal and state special education requirements

Relate instruction for students with disabilities to the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards

Foster parent-educator collaboration in the delivery of special education programs and services

The Learning Resource Centers (LRCs) are supported through the New Jersey State Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, and are funded through I.D.E.A. Part B Funds and section 619 Pre-School Funds. You may contact your regional Learning Resource Center for information regarding workshop registration.

	LRC-N, East Orange 973-414-4495	LRC-NS, Morris Plains 973-292-5894	LRC-C, Aberdeen 732-441-0061	LRC-S, Sewell 856-582-7000
Collaboration in the Special Education Process	Nov 12, 2002 7:00 - 9:00 PM	Dec 3, 2002 7:00 - 9:00 PM	Oct 24, 2002 7:00 - 9:00 PM	Nov 20, 2002 7:00 - 9:00 PM
A Positive Approach to Managing Challenging Behavior	Dec 12, 2002 7:00 - 9:00 PM	Feb 6, 2003 7:00 - 9:00 PM	Nov 14, 2002 7:00 - 9:00 PM	Oct 29, 2002 7:00 - 9:00 PM

The Learning Resource Centers are registered New Jersey Professional Development Providers.

Reading About
Family & Community Involvement

The ABC's of Parent Involvement in Education: Preparing Your Child for a Lifetime of Success

Parenting Coalition International
202-530-0849
www.parentingcoalition.org

This book is a compilation of tips, stories, poems and essays from parents and parenting professionals. It includes activities, resources, and contact information.

Parents Assuring Student Success (PASS)

National Education Service (1993)
800-733-6786

Describes a program in Indiana that successfully motivated and involved low-income families in their children's education.

Engaging Families & Communities: Pathways to Educational Success

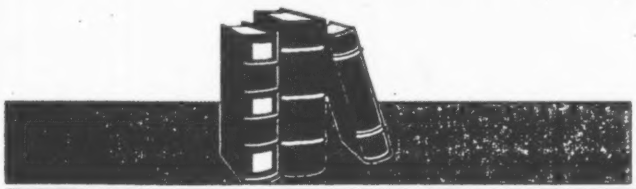
National Community Education Association
703-359-8973
www.ncea.com

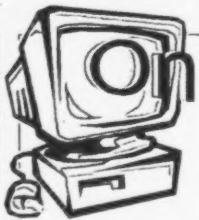
This book highlights the best ideas and models for creating and maintaining family and community involvement.

Family Involvement in Children's Education: Successful Local Approaches, An Idea Book

U.S. Government Printing Office,
Superintendent of Documents
Mail Stop: SSOP, Washington, DC 20402-9328

This book is issued by the US Department of Education. It is designed for school administrators, teachers, policymakers and parents to help families become more active participants in their children's education. This book is based on case studies of 20 successful programs around the country.





On The Web

Internet Resources for Parents and Professionals

Federal Resources of Educational Excellence (FREE)

A group of 30 Federal agencies have made hundreds of federally supported education resources available at this web site, enriching the Internet as a tool for teaching and learning.

www.ed.gov/free

Communities in Schools

Works to keep at-risk students in school through mobilizing community resources to partner with schools, especially in mentoring and tutoring programs. Write: 277 South Washington Street, Suite 210, Alexandria, VA 22314, e-mail: padillaa@cisnet.org.

www.cisnet.org

Partnership for Family Involvement in Education (PFIE)

(800) USA-LEARN

The mission of PFIE is to increase opportunities for families to be more involved in their children's learning at school and at home and to use family/school/community partnerships to strengthen schools and improve student achievement. Write: 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202.

http://pfie.ed.gov

Institute for Responsive Education

(617) 373-2595

IRE promotes family and community involvement in education with a special emphasis on issues of educational equity. Write: 50 Nightingale Hall, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115

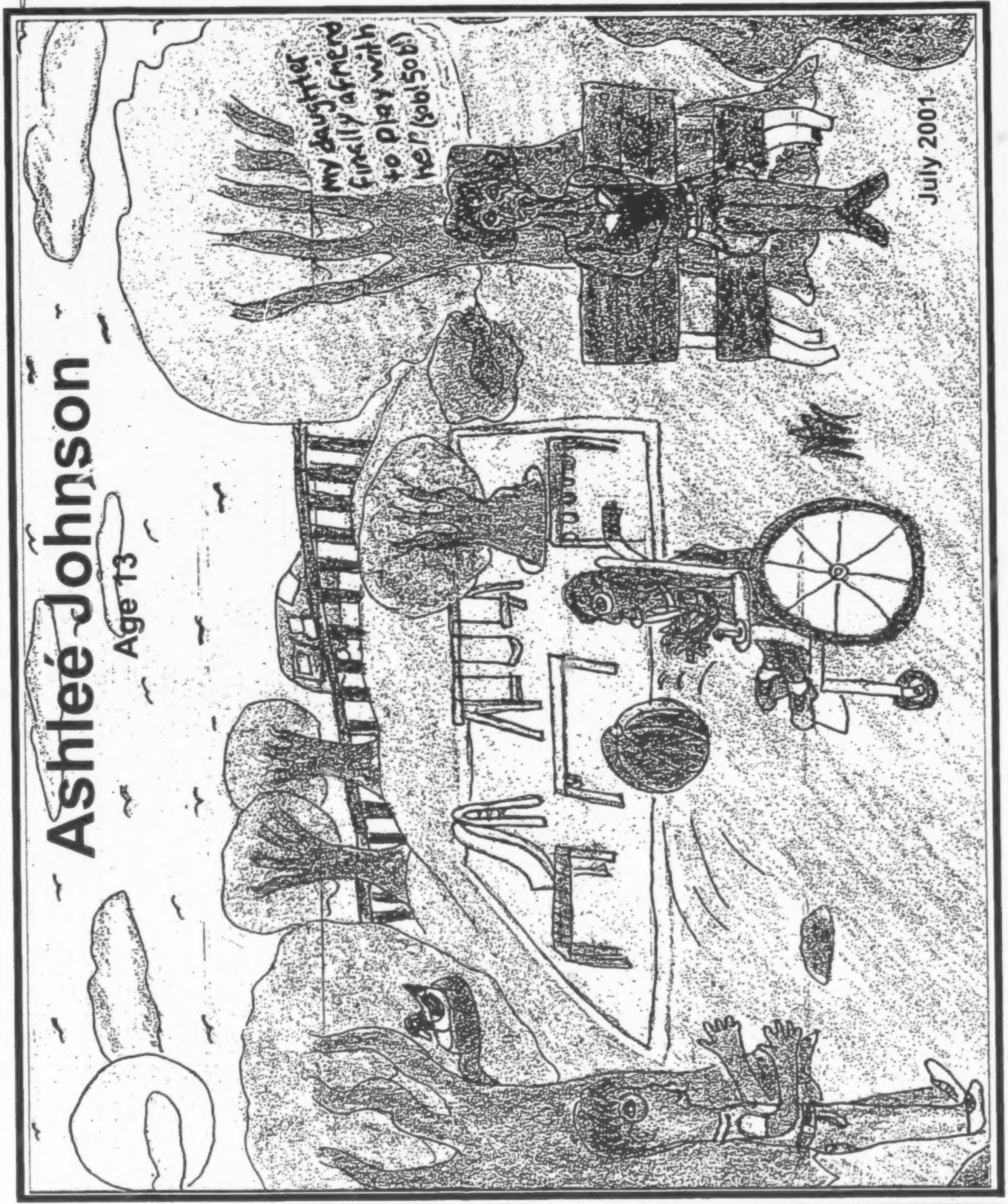
www.responsiveeducation.org

National Alliance of Business - Center for Excellence in Education

(202) 289-2595

The Alliance promotes and supports business involvement in education restructuring—bringing business, government, education and community organizations together in efforts to foster educational change. Write: 1201 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005.

www.nab.com


my daughter finally afriend to play with her (sob! sob!)

Ashleé Johnson
Age 13

July 2001

Membership Application

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network

SPAN Membership

SPAN serves the communities of New Jersey free of charge.
However, we need your support to continue our services to families and professionals throughout the state.

By becoming a member of SPAN you will receive the following:

- Three issues of *The Bridge* throughout the year, PLUS our "Back to School" issue
- Reserved seating at our annual conference at a reduced rate
- Training materials at a 20% discount

To become a member of SPAN, or to subscribe to *The Bridge*, please fill out the membership application below.

SPAN Membership

YES! I would like to become a member of SPAN.
Please enroll me as a member in the following category:

____ $35 Individual Membership
____ $50 Family Membership
____ $100 Friend of SPAN
____ $150 Professional / Organization
____ $250 Corporate Member
____ $500 Executive Benefactor
____ Other ____________________

The Bridge Subscription

Subscription to The Bridge *includes three issues throughout the year PLUS an additional "Back to School" issue.*

____ $25 4 issues of *The Bridge*

____ $25 I would like to sponsor a subscription to *The Bridge* for a family unable to afford it.

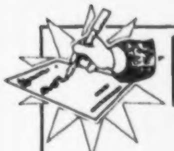
____ I would like to subscribe to *The Bridge*, but I am financially unable to afford the subscription fee. Please consider me for a Sponsored Subscription.

____ I do not wish to have my name and mailing information made available to other groups or organizations.

$ __________ **Total Amount Enclosed** — Please make checks payable to SPAN, Inc. (Do not send cash)

Name: ____________________
Address: ____________________
City: ____________________ State: __________ Zip Code: __________
Home Phone: ____________________ Business Phone: ____________________
E-mail: ____________________ County: ____________________

Please return this membership application and payment to:
SPAN, 35 Halsey Street, 4th Floor, Newark, NJ 07102, Attn: Maria Rodriguez



Mark Your Calendar

Making Connections for Student Success: SPAN Conference 2003

March 14-15, 2003 - *SAVE THE DATE!*

Learning Resource Center Project

The Learning Resource Centers are offering the workshops ***Collaboration in the Special Education Process*** *and* ***A Positive Approach to Managing Challenging Behavior****. See page 28 for dates, locations, and more information.*

Support for Families & Students
Nov 5 10 am - 12 pm New Brunswick Library: Patricia Lovelace (908) 731-4360 x5098

Special Education & School Reform
Nov 5 10 - 11:30 am Elizabeth: Linda Olive (973) 642-8100 x115

ADHD
Nov 7 7:00 - 9:30 pm Union Res Ctr, Union: Barbara Walcheski (908) 686-6644 x12

Best Practices in Transition Services
Nov 12 6:45 - 8:45 pm Monmouth Cty Library, Manalapan: Judy Livny (732) 792-0594

IEP Workshops
Nov 14 7:00 - 9:00 pm Roselle Park Middle School: Tracy Maccia (908) 241-3944
Nov 21 7:00 - 9:30 pm School One, Scotch Plains: Claire Okell (908) 654-9533

School Climate, Facilities & A Systematic Approach to Discipline
Nov 19 10 am - 12 pm New Brunswick Library: Patricia Lovelace (908) 731-4360 x5098

Family Resource Day
Nov 19 10 am - 12 pm Jardine Academy, Cranford: Martha Goz (908) 653-9333 x205

Positive Behavioral Supports / Discipline
Nov 20 10 am - 2:30 pm SPAN, 35 Halsey Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room, Newark
Penny Dragonetti (973) 642-8100 x102

Parent Professional Collaboration / Conflict Resolution
Nov 22 10 am - 2:30 pm SPAN, 35 Halsey Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room, Newark
Penny Dragonetti (973) 642-8100 x102

How is My School / District Doing?
Nov 26 10 am - 12 pm New Brunswick Library: Patricia Lovelace (908) 731-4360 x5098

Communication & Professionalism
Dec 11 6:45 - 8:45 pm Monmouth Cty Library, Manalapan: Judy Livny (732) 792-0594

Resources Available to Parents
Jan 14 6:45 - 8:45 pm Monmouth Cty Library, Manalapan: Judy Livny (732) 792-0594

The Law

Basic Rights
Dec 5 7:30 - 9:30 pm Indian Flds Elem School, Dayton: Victoria Gartlant (732) 274-1606
Dec 9 7:00 - 9:00 pm Galloway Twp Historical Room: D. Bieniakowski (609) 965-1335
Jan 27 7:00 - 9:00 pm Reynolds Mid School, Hamilton Sq: Bev Bowser (609) 393-4077

Federal Laws & Programs for Student Achievement
Nov 12 10 am - 12 pm New Brunswick Library: Patricia Lovelace (908) 731-4360 x5098

Basic Rights / IDEA / 504
Nov 12 10 am - 2:30 pm United Way, 303 Washington St, 2nd Flr Conf Room, Newark
Penny Dragonetti (973) 642-8100 x102

IEP / LRE / Inclusion
Nov 15 10 am - 2:30 pm SPAN, 35 Halsey Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room, Newark
Penny Dragonetti (973) 642-8100 x102

Violence Prevention Workshops

For info and registration, please call Sh'corah Yehudah at (973) 642-8100 x113.

Effective Discipline Practices for Families
Nov 19 8:30 - 10:15 am Lincoln School, Newark

Creating Positive School Environments (Bilingual)
Nov 21 8:30 - 9:30 am Abraham Lincoln School, Elizabeth

The Violence Prevention Project facilitates two extensive trainings: ***Strengthening Families Program*** *and* ***Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families & Communities****. Please contact Sh'corah Yehudah at (973) 642-8100 x113 for the workshop series schedule.*

The Parent's Role in Teaching and Learning

Parent Involvement in Creating Effective Schools
Nov 20 5:00 pm Tiny Love Day Care Center, Irvington: Damita Lucas (973) 373-3992

School Reform & Standards
Dec 18 5:00 pm Tiny Love Day Care Center, Irvington: Damita Lucas (973) 373-3992

Staff Development & Assessments
Jan 15 5:00 pm Tiny Love Day Care Center, Irvington: Damita Lucas (973) 373-3992

Find all SPAN workshops, trainings and events at www.spannj.org

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit #298
Newark, NJ 07102

The Bridge
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Inc.
35 Halsey Street, 4th Floor
Newark, New Jersey 07102
(973) 642-8100
(800) 654-SPAN (7726)
www.spannj.org

The Bridge is a publication of the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Inc. supported by a grant from the U.S Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (Grant #HO29M60023).
The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education.

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Creating Universal Partnerships

Annual Conference of the

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network

March 8 & 9, 2002

Ramada Inn
National
Conference
Center

East Windsor,
New Jersey

Conference 2002 Sponsors

New Jersey Education Association

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Special Education Programs

NJ Department of Health & Senior Services
Special Child, Adult & Early Intervention Services

SPAN Supporters

Bright Futures / Maternal & Child Health Bureau of U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

Center for Health Care Strategies

Developmental Disabilities Council of New Jersey

Family Voices

Healthcare Foundation

IOLTA Fund of the New Jersey Bar Association

Mercer County Division for Youth

New Jersey Department of Education

New Jersey Department of Health & Senior Services, Special Child & Adult Health Services

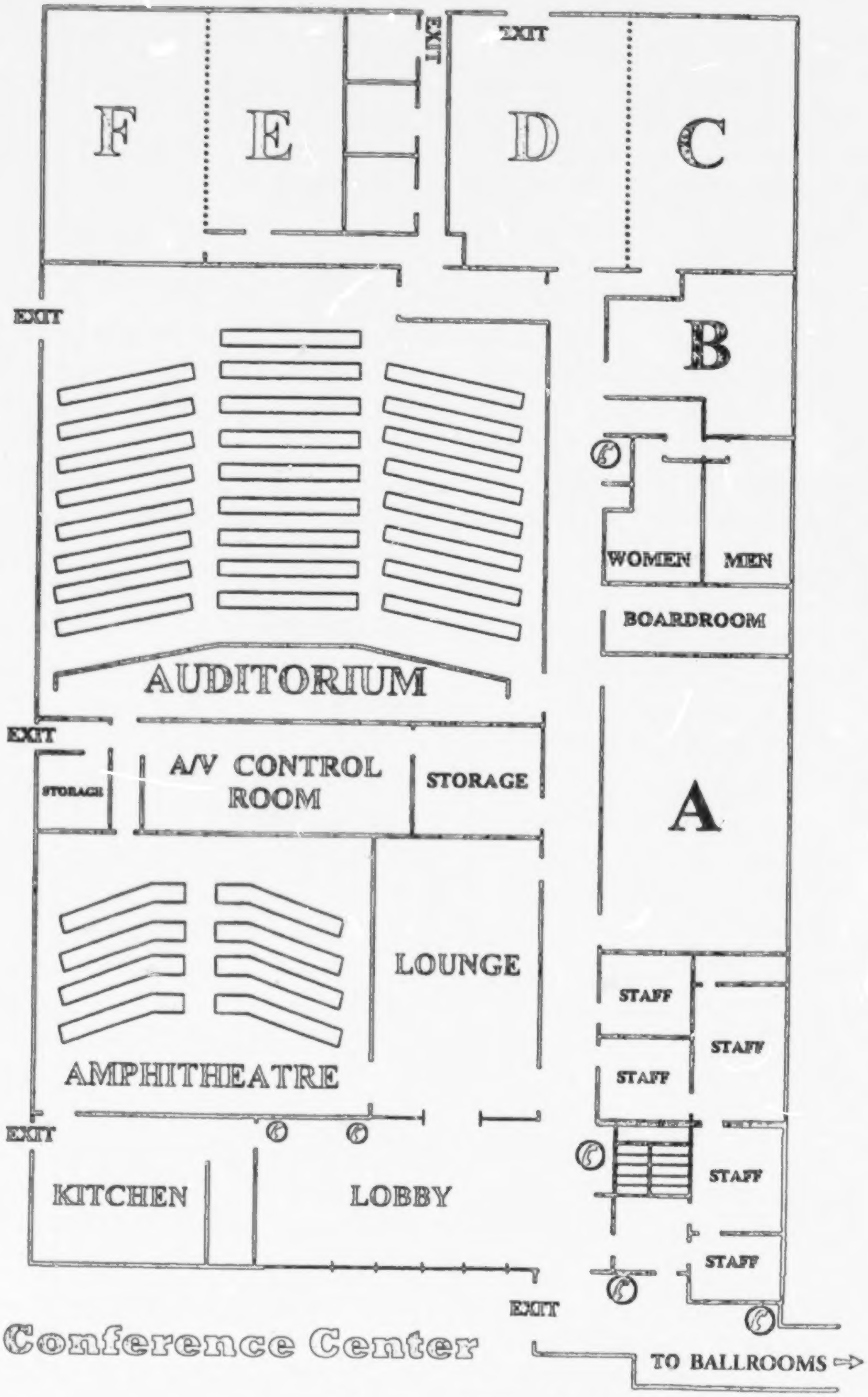
New Jersey Department of Human Services

Schumann Fund of New Jersey

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education Programs

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Special Education Programs

Ramada Inn



Ballrooms A and B are not shown on this map

Please Note:

On Friday, March 8, room pairs C & D and E & F will be joined to create larger spaces ("C/D," "E/F")

National Conference Center

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Agenda

March 8, 2002

Commissioner of Education
Hon. William Librera
will be giving remarks at
9:30 am on Friday, March 8th

Friday

REGISTRATION & LIGHT BREAKFAST

Lobby
8:30 – 9:00 AM

OPENING SESSION

Ballroom
9:00 – 9:30 AM

Welcome
Debra Conway, SPAN Conference Co-Chair

Remarks
Debra Jennings, SPAN Acting Executive Director

Keynote Address
Edithe Fulton, President, New Jersey Education Association

Introduction of Guest Speaker
Debra Jennings

Special Guest Speaker
Hon. William L. Librera,
State of New Jersey Commissioner of Education

MORNING SESSION

See workshop schedule for locations
9:45 AM - 11:15 AM

LUNCH

Ballroom
11:30 PM - 12:30 PM

EARLY AFTERNOON SESSION

See workshop schedule for locations
12:30 PM - 2:00 PM

MID-AFTERNOON SESSION

See workshop schedule for locations
2:15 PM - 3:45 PM

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CREDIT

SPAN NJ is a registered provider with the State of New Jersey. Programs offered at this conference are eligible for Professional Development Credit. Participants may qualify for up to **5 hours of continuing education units for each day of the conference**.

PLEASE BE PUNCTUAL!

To qualify for Professional Development Credit, participants must **arrive within the first 10 minutes of the presentation and remain until its conclusion**.

Keynote Speaker

9:00 AM - 9:30 AM

Edithe Fulton

President
New Jersey Education Association

With her election to the presidency of the 172,000-member New Jersey Education Association in May 2001, Edithe Fulton leads the organization for the second time in her 35-year career in public education.

An admired and respected education leader, Ms. Fulton is known as a strong advocate for education employees and their students.

She returns to the NJEA presidency as the organization launches a new initiative: Expanding the Scope of Advocacy for Great Public Schools. She will be NJEA's primary spokesperson on a wide range of issues, ranging from legislation to permit educators to negotiate over professional concerns to reducing class size in the elementary grades.

Ms. Fulton serves as NJEA president from 1981 to 1985, after serving as the association's secretary-treasurer and vice-president. She has just completes a four-year term as NJEA vice president, after four years as secretary-treasurer.

For the past four years, she has served as host of "Classroom Close-Up, New Jersey," NJEA's Emmy Award Winning weekly TV show airing on NJN, and featuring stories on innovative public school programs and current issues facing New Jersey educators.

During her first term as NJEA president, Ms. Fulton articulated NJEA members' views during the emergence of state and national education reform movements. During that time, she served on the Governor's Commission on Alternative Certification and the Governor's Master Teacher Commission.

As a teacher and member of her local association, she has been a strong advocate for her members and their students. Her colleagues have elected her to numerous leadership positions, including the presidency of the Lakehurst Education Association and the Ocean County Education Association.

Ms. Fulton has twice been elected to the Board of Directors of the National Education Association, and is serving her 30th consecutive year as an NJEA delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly.

She began her career in 1966 as a fourth-grade teacher at Lakehurst Elementary School, and has been on leave from her teaching position while serving as an NJEA officer.

A trained musician and performing artist, Ms. Fulton combined those talents in her capacity as a fourth-grade teacher and a K-8 teacher of performing arts in Lakehurst, in a program that encompassed art, poetry, illustration, public speaking, and debating.

She served on the Council of New Jersey Affairs at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School, and has been active in a wide range of community activities with her church, hospital auxiliary, and UNICEF.

Ms. Fulton is married to Herb Smith, a retired teacher, and lives in Toms River. She has three sons, two daughters-in-law, and four granddaughters.

Friday

Morning Workshops

9:45 AM - 11:15 AM

Friday

The Abbott Regulations: Implications for School Improvement — **Auditorium**

Robert Broderick, Field Representative for Leadership Training, NJEA
Tonya Hall, SPAN Project Coordinator, New Jersey Parent Information Resource Center (NJPIRC)

The Abbott regulations are supposed to govern how Abbott districts operate. Hear an overview of these regulations and how you can work with them to help shape your child's educational experience. There will be a question and answer period and a time for sharing experiences across district lines.

Strategies for Successful Inclusion: Adaptations & Modifications — **E / F**

Dan Castelgrant, NJEA Professional Development Consultant

This hands-on workshop allows participants to discover an array of activities, methods and adaptive strategies for teaching all students in an inclusive setting. Ideal for general and special education teachers and paraprofessionals.

Special Kids are Gifted, Too! — **Ballroom A**

Diana Autin, Director, Statewide Parent Advocacy Network

Learn more about the various ways in which children learn and communicate their understanding of the world. Use children's strengths to support weaker areas of learning and help them make a positive contribution to the classroom.

Bully-Proofing the Classroom — **C / D**

Lisa Daly, c/o Barbara T. Sprechman, Prevention First

Learn how to prevent bullying by heightening students' self-esteem, pride, security, and confidence within the classroom. Strategies will be provided which school staff can use to enable students to identify their feelings/emotions, perceptions, and needs as part of learning how to accept and respect others. Participants will gain tools for creating a comfortable, secure school environment where students can relax, be themselves, and open up to appropriate educational and social experiences.

Parents and Professionals: Partners Together — **Ballroom B**

Deborah Conway, Associate Director, Professional Development & Instructional Issues, NJEA
Penny Dragonetti, SPAN Northern Training Coordinator

Schools work best when families, school staff and communities work as partners. Partnerships take work and trust. This workshop focuses on collaborative teaming, communication, and advocacy, and is specifically designed for both parents and educators. Strategies for building trusting relationships and creating successful plans will be shared.

The Transition-Communication Connection: All About Augmentative Communication — **B**

Suzanne Montagna, CCC-SLP, Speech Language Pathologist, Emerson Jr./Sr. High School
Patricia Paraskevacos, SPAN Project Coordinator, Project CARE
Kimberly Bridle, CCC-SLP, ATP, Assistive Technology Specialist, Bergen County Special Services

Examine and discuss a model for providing effective communication alternatives to verbal/nonverbal students at the transition age of 14 and above. This workshop specifically focuses on considering augmentative communication systems as a support or backup for traditional oral communication and looks at teambuilding, peer support, and integration strategies from the perspective of a parent, a speech-language pathologist, and an assistive technology specialist.

Friday

Early Afternoon Workshops

12:30 PM - 2:00 PM

Basic Legal Rights of IDEA and Section 504: Contrast and Compare — Auditorium

Penny Dragonetti, SPAN Northern Training Coordinator

This workshop focuses on the right to services and accommodations for students with disabilities and special health/emotional needs who may be eligible for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or IDEA. The workshop describes the similarities and differences between these two federal laws.

Functional Behavior Assessments and the Inclusive Classroom — Ballroom A

Chris Devaney, Building Futures Project, Division of Developmental Disabilities
Cliff VonSternberg, Building Futures Project, Division of Developmental Disabilities

In order to effectively address challenging behavior, team members need to understand why behaviors occur, even after numerous intervention efforts have been attempted. This can be accomplished by conducting a thorough functional assessment. This workshop will demonstrate to participants on how to properly conduct a functional Behavioral Assessment in order to have a full understanding of why a behavior is occurring.

Violence: Its Impact and Implications — Ballroom B

Judith Lockard, Institute for Family Services, Inc.

Taking a global look at violence: how it shapes societies, how its impact affects us morally, socially, emotionally, sexually, culturally and spiritually; its implication in various cultures and how that impacts on all humanity.

Parents' Perspectives — C / D

Malia Corde, SPAN Project Coordinator, Parent to Parent
Patricia Paraskevacos, SPAN Project Coordinator, Project CARE
Nina Serebransky, Southern Regional Associate, NJ Statewide Parent to Parent

This workshop will give parents and professionals the chance to hear from parents "who have been there" and how they have dealt with the joys and struggles of raising a child with special needs. You will be able to ask questions and gain valuable information and resources.

Getting On Board: Reaching Out to Community Partners — E / F

Deborah Conway, Associate Director, Professional Development & Instructional Issues, NJEA

Discover strategies for organizing elements of the community to become active participating stakeholders who step up to the plate to assume shared responsibility for the education of all children.

Mid-Afternoon Workshops

2:15 PM - 3:45 PM

The IEP: The Living Document — Ballroom A

Peg Kinsell, SPAN Southern Training Coordinator
Roberta Wohle, Office of Special Education Programs, New Jersey Department of Education

Families and educators are introduced their roles in developing and implementing an effective Individualized Educational Program. Step by step, the facilitators will take you through the process and demonstrate how collaborative teamwork equals results for children.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation: From the IEP to the IPE — C / D

Alice Hunnicutt, SPAN Project Coordinator, Transition to Adult Life

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) entitles students with disabilities to receive the transition services necessary to ensure successful linkages upon graduation. A critical link for students in transition is with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. (DVRS). DVRS provides support necessary to achieve employment for persons with disabilities. Two years prior to graduation a counselor from DVRS can open a case for a student in transition. The student's *Individual Education Program* employment goals should be included in the DVRS *Individual Plan for Employment*. This workshop will show participants a systematic approach to incorporate goals and objectives related to career from the student's IEP into the IPE.

Making A Difference: Effective Advocacy — E / F

Part I: Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance: Preparing for Advocacy

Diana Autin, Statewide Parent Advocacy Network

Parents and professionals can work together to change the policies and practices that affect our children. This three-part workshop provides the information and tools you need to be an effective grassroots public policy advocate.

In this program we answer: What is "advocacy?" How does change happen? How can you be a more effective advocate for change? What is the role of a vision, mission, and strategic plan in public policy advocacy? This workshop introduces you to the change process and gives you tools and helpful hints on how to prepare your public policy "action plan."

Positive Behavior Supports — Auditorium

Chris Devaney, Building Futures Project, Division of Developmental Disabilities
Cliff VonSternberg, Building Futures Project, Division of Developmental Disabilities

One of the greatest challenges facing educators in inclusive settings is knowing how to work with students who exhibit challenging behavior. One of the most effective strategies to address this is through school-based teams working collaboratively, to assess, problem solve, design and implement positive behavior support plans. This workshop will present a proactive approach to understanding the functions and conditions affecting challenging behavior. Participants will learn best practice strategies to conduct a functional assessment and how to use this information to collaboratively design an intervention plan that provides positive supports and teach students alternative skills and/or coping strategies.

Anger Management — Ballroom B

Sam Hull, Bridgeton Public Schools

This workshop is designed to help educators and parents maintain self-control and maximize healthy communications even when provoked or irritated. Discover strategies and techniques to defuse conflict and handle confrontations in a non-harmful manner.

Starting Your Own Study Group — B

C.R. Williams, Caldwell Public Schools

Learn a collaborative approach to professional development supported by the New Jersey Network for Educational Renewal. Hear about sharing innovative efforts and ideas through an electronic journal and doing classroom research.

Our Exhibitors

New Jersey Education Association
180 West State St., P.O. Box 1211, Trenton, NJ 08607-1211
(609) 599-4561
fax: (609) 599-1201
www.njea.org

Danny Adlerman
47 Stoneham Place, Metuchen, NJ 08840
(732) 548-1779
e-mail: bookkids@aol.com
www.dannyandkim.com
www.author-illustr-source.com/danandkimadlerman.htm

AXA Advisors
Michael Feldenzer, Financial Consultant
750 Route 73, Suite 207, Marlton, NJ 08053
(856) 751-2688
fax: (856) 751-3309
e-mail: michael.feldenzer@axa-advisors.com
www.axaonline.com

Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities / UMDNJ
Robyn Risley, Communications
335 George St., P.O. Box 2688, New Brunswick, NJ 08809
(732) 235-9310
fax: (732) 235-9330
e-mail: risleyre@umdnj.edu
http://rwjms.umdnj.edu/boggscenter

Douglass Outreach
Marlene Brown, Assistant Division Director
30 Gibbons Circle, New Brunswick, NJ 08901
(732) 932-3902
fax: (732) 932-4469
e-mail: cricardo@rci.rutgers.edu
www.rci.rutgers.edu/dddc

Family Support Center

Family Voices
Lauren Agoratus & Beverly Bowser, Project Coordinators
c/o Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
35 Halsey Street, 4th Floor, Newark, NJ 07102
(800) 654-7726
Lauren: (609) 584-5779
e-mail: familyvoices@spannj.org
www.spannj.org/family_voices.htm

Family WRAP
Patricia Paraskevacos, Project Coordinator
c/o Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
35 Halsey Street, 4th Floor, Newark, NJ 07102
(800) 654-7726
Patricia: (973) 523-6778 x19
e-mail: paraskevac@aol.com
www.spannj.org

NJ Dept. of Health & Senior Services Special Child, Adult & Early Intervention Services
Gloria Jones-Grant, Director
P. O. Box 360, Trenton, NJ 08625-0360
(609) 984-0755
gjonesgrant@doh.state.nj.us
www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/schome.htm

New Jersey Developmental Disabilities Council
Monique Wilson, Statewide Family Support Coordinator
P.O. Box 700, Trenton, NJ 08625
(609) 341-3112
fax: (609) 292-7114
e-mail: monique.wilson@njddc.org
www.njddc.org

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
35 Halsey Street, 4th Floor, Newark, NJ 07102
(800) 654-7726
fax: (973) 642-8080
e-mail: span@spannj.org
www.spannj.org

U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs
400 Maryland Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20202
(202) 205-5507
www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/

A Vision in Motion Speakers Bureau
Jay Gittleson, President
380 Washington Avenue, Rutherford, NJ 07070
(201) 939-1088
e-mail: jay@visioninmotion.com
www.avisioninmotion.com

Agenda

March 9, 2002

Saturday

REGISTRATION & LIGHT BREAKFAST

Lobby
8:30 – 9:00 AM

OPENING SESSION

Ballroom
9:00 – 9:30 AM

Welcome
Patti Ciccone, SPAN Conference Co-Chair

Remarks
Debra Jennings, SPAN Acting Executive Director

Keynote Address
Jennifer McKeown, Young Adult, Student, and Self Advocate

MORNING SESSION

See workshop schedule for locations
9:45 AM - 11:15 AM

LUNCH

Ballroom
11:30 PM - 12:30 PM

EARLY AFTERNOON SESSION

See workshop schedule for locations
12:30 PM - 2:00 PM

MID-AFTERNOON SESSION

See workshop schedule for locations
2:15 PM - 3:45 PM

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CREDIT

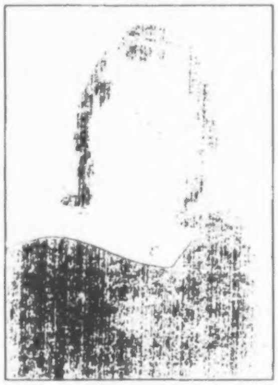
SPAN NJ is a registered provider with the State of New Jersey. Programs offered at this conference are eligible for Professional Development Credit. Participants may qualify for up to 5 hours of continuing education units for each day of the conference.

PLEASE BE PUNCTUAL!

To qualify for Professional Development Credit, participants must arrive within the first 10 minutes of the presentation and remain until its conclusion.

Keynote Speaker

9:00 AM - 9:30 AM



Jennifer McKeown

Jennifer's Vision for Her Life in the Community

A student shares the journey of her life in the community and her dreams and aspirations for the future.

Jennifer is a second year senior at Washington Township High School in Washington Township, Gloucester County, New Jersey. She is currently a part time employee at Home Depot in Turnersville, New Jersey.

Jennifer's favorite recreational activities include singing and dancing in local community theater productions.

In the past three years, Jennifer has presented at many local, state, and national conferences in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Florida to parent groups, agencies, school districts, and students on the topics of self determination and a valued participating life in the community.

Morning Workshops

9:45 AM - 11:15 AM

The IEP: The Living Document — Auditorium

Peg Kinsell, SPAN Southern Training Coordinator
Roberta Wohle, Office of Special Education Programs, New Jersey Department of Education

Families and educators are introduced their roles in developing and implementing an effective Individualized Educational Program. Step by step, the facilitators will take you through the process and demonstrate how collaborative teamwork equals results for children.

If Abbott is the Law, Where's the Money? — Ballroom A

Irene Sterling, Executive Director, Paterson Education Fund

Participants will receive an update on the fiscal realities of Abbott funding. Learn more about ongoing legal actions and what we may expect with the new governor regarding moving forward with the Supreme Court's ruling on parity in educational opportunities for all children.

Creating Kids with Compassion: Taking the "Dis" Out of Disability — Ballroom B

Paul Stuart Wichansky, A Vision in Motion Speakers Bureau

For twenty-one years, Paul has been visiting New Jersey schools to discuss the perspectives and realities of growing up with his cerebral palsy. By sharing his experiences with humor, while encouraging students to ask questions that would help positively shape their understanding of people with disabilities, Paul tries to instill the hope, energy, and inspiration that students need to achieve their own goals and dreams in life. A highly effective and polished speaker, Paul is presently a member of A Vision in Motion, a speakers bureau of motivators who have overcome tremendous adversities to inspire and positively shape the lives of children and teens.

None of Us is as Smart as All of Us: Developing Your Own Mutual Aid Self-Help Group — E

Ed Madera, Director, NJ Self-Help Group Clearinghouse

Will describe the "nuts and bolts" of joining with others to start and run a parent support group that meets your needs and those of your members. Will touch on ways to develop an online support group if your child has a rare disorder for which there is no existing mutual support network.

Making A Difference: Effective Advocacy — F

Part II: Democracy is Not a Spectator Sport: Introduction to Advocacy Strategies

Diana Autin, Statewide Parent Advocacy Network

Parents and professionals can work together to change the policies and practices that affect our children.
This three-part workshop provides the information and tools you need to be an effective grassroots public policy advocate.

This introductory, hands-on workshop is for parents and professionals who have little or no experience participating in public policy advocacy. If you've never visited a legislator or testified before a state agency, this is the workshop for you! Learn how to reach legislative, executive, and regulatory policymakers with your written and in-person thoughts and ideas. Workshop participants will plan and carry out a role-play of a group visit to a legislator.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Saturday

Early Afternoon Workshops

12:30 PM - 2:00 PM

Special Education Update — Auditorium

Barbara Gantwerk, Director, Office of Special Education Programs, New Jersey Department of Education

10 Steps to a Drug-Free Child — E

Connie Schmidt

Parents and educators are the frontline defense for keeping children drug free. Learn the important messages to impart to young people and the signs to look for.

Violence: Its Impact and Implications — Ballroom A

Diane K. Jordan, MA, LPC, Institute for Family Services, Inc.

Taking a global look at violence: how it shapes societies, how its impact affects us morally, socially, emotionally, sexually, culturally and spiritually; its implication in various cultures and how that impacts on all humanity.

We Are Not "Including" Anyone - They Are Already There — B

Mary Sullivan, Assistant Principal, Director of Child Study, Franklin Township Elementary School
Cindy Hudock, RN, Franklin Township Elementary School
Malia Corde, SPAN Project Coordinator, Parent to Parent

The Franklin Township School district's philosophy is that all students can and, in most instances, should be educated among their peers within the general education environment. A snapshot of one of our students should provide evidence that our philosophy is not only educationally and morally right for children, but that it does indeed work for them.

Families, Communities and Schools Together — Ballroom B

Rev. A. B. Frazier, Pastor, Second Baptist Church and Community Development Center
Hazel Russell, Community Relations Specialist, NJ Department of Labor
J. Augustus Jones, Educator, Burlington City Public Schools
Olivia Baxter, Educator, Burlington City Public Schools

Hear more about how collaboration can effect positive change. Schools are finding that parents and community agencies are great partners for raising student achievement. Learn about programs that can help you find support for improvements to your school and your neighborhoods.

Making A Difference: Effective Advocacy — F

Part III: Advanced Advocacy: Making a Real Difference

Diana Autin, Statewide Parent Advocacy Network

Parents and professionals can work together to change the policies and practices that affect our children. This three-part workshop provides the information and tools you need to be an effective grassroots public policy advocate.

This hands-on workshop is for parents and professionals who have dabbled a little in policy advocacy – or for those who have completed Part II of the training series. If you've written some letters, met once or a few times with a legislator, or participated on a task force or committee reviewing public policy, this is the workshop for you! Learn how to expand your influence through grassroots, media, and coalition advocacy. Spread the word and the work!

Mid-Afternoon Workshops

2:15 PM - 3:45 PM

Basic Legal Rights of IDEA and Section 504: Contrast and Compare — Auditorium

Penny Dragonetti, SPAN's Resource Center Coordinator

This workshop focuses on the right to services and accommodations for students with disabilities and special health/emotional needs who may be eligible for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or IDEA. The workshop describes the similarities and differences between these two federal laws.

Making Inclusion Happen — Ballroom A

Paula Leib, Esq., President, NJ Coalition for Inclusive Education

Learn more about the legal aspects of inclusion with an emphasis on what parents need to know.

New Jersey's Children's System of Care Initiative — F

Lea Phelps, Monmouth County Family Support Organization

Sue DiBennedetto, Monmouth County Family Support Organization

For just over a year, parents and care managers have been implementing a new system which coordinates services for children with special emotional and/or behavior needs. Come and hear the progress in these first months and find out when these services will be coming to your county.

Bully-Proofing: How to Help Your Child Resolve Conflict — Ballroom B

Judy Linscott, LCSW, CPS, c/o Barbara T. Sprechman, Prevention First

Parents will learn the ABC's of bullying behavior: its origins, its impact on the actor and the victim; how to recognize warning signs; and how to constructively resolve conflicts and seek alternative solutions with youngsters.

A Couples' Panel Discussion — E

This workshop will give couples an opportunity to speak with other couples who are raising a child with special needs. These couples come from various backgrounds and have children with various special needs. Hear first hand from them how raising a child with special needs has impacted their marriages and how they have kept their marriages strong through the ups and downs of daily life.

Managed Care for Children with Special Health Care Needs and their Families — B

Cathie Sims, BSN, MPH, Researcher, Family Voices of NJ at SPAN

This workshop will introduce you to New Jersey Care 2000+, the new Medicaid managed health care system for New Jersey residents. Topics include: what services are covered; useful terminology; selecting a plan and a provider; working with providers; advocating for your child; appeals; and resources. Principles discussed may be useful for anyone interacting with an HMO for the first time.

Our Presenters

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ANNUAL REPORT

Activities
July 1, 2001 - June 30, 2002

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STATEWIDE PARENT ADVOCACY NETWORK
JULY 1, 2001 – JUNE 30, 2002

Mission

The mission of the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) is to empower families and inform and involve professionals and other individuals interested in the healthy development and education rights of children. Through this collaboration, all children will become fully participating and contributing members of our communities and society. SPAN's foremost commitment is to children with the greatest need due to disability; poverty; discrimination based on race, sex, or language; geographic location; or other special circumstances.

SPAN Activities

SPAN works toward our mission by providing information, training, technical assistance, support, leadership development, and public policy advocacy on education, health and human services issues affecting children ages birth to 21. SPAN's multi-faceted program is carried out by a bilingual, multiracial staff of 55 parents throughout New Jersey.

Individual Advocacy and Technical Assistance

SPAN staff and Resource Parents assist over 60,000 families, students, and professionals each year in resolving education and health-related issues free of charge.

Parent and Professional Development

SPAN conducts extensive workshops on educational rights and advocacy, collaboration, and leadership skills for 42,500 parents, educators, community-based organizations, and other professionals annually. We also publish and disseminate materials to over 100,000 parents, professionals and advocates for children and youth each year. Our website, www.spannj.org, is visited by over 20,000 families annually.

Research, Administrative Negotiation, and Litigation

In conjunction with other advocacy organizations, SPAN conducts action-oriented research on issues identified by our work. Our research and reports are the basis of reform-directed negotiations with public officials. When negotiations are not successful, SPAN collaborates with other advocacy organizations in litigation to promote systemic change to improve service delivery for thousands of children in public schools, such as litigation on fiscal equity for urban schools, and improvements in special education regulations and standards.

Overview

Since 1987, the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) has worked in partnership with New Jersey's most impoverished and vulnerable families to secure quality and equal public education and health services for all children, from infancy to age 21. SPAN works on behalf of children who are at greatest risk for discrimination and/or academic failure due to poverty, race, ethnicity, disability, special health or emotional needs, immigrant status or limited English proficiency, involvement in the child welfare or juvenile justice system, homelessness, or other special circumstances.

In the last three years, SPAN has moved to the forefront of educational advocacy, training and policy in New Jersey. SPAN has more than doubled in size, to its current complement of 55 full- and part-time staff, doubled in operating budget, opened six additional offices throughout New Jersey, and substantially expanded program activities. SPAN's leadership has been honored by receipt of the Rockefeller Foundation "Next Generation of Leadership" Fellowship for 2001-2002, as well as the 2002 Distinguished Service Award from the New Jersey Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

SPAN is New Jersey's *Parent Information & Resource Center*, operating the *Parent Leadership Development Institute*; *Parents as Teachers (PAT)* programs in Abbott districts and with migrant workers; and the *Violence Prevention/Strengthening Families* program. SPAN is also the *Parent Training and Information Center* for families of children with special needs. SPAN houses *New Jersey Statewide Parent to Parent* and *Family Voices*, and is a chapter of the *Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health*. SPAN partners with the New Jersey State Department of Education on the State Improvement Grant, operating the *Statewide Technical Assistance Resource Team Project (START)*. SPAN also partners with the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services on *Family WRAP (Wisdom, Resources, Advocacy, and Parent-to-Parent Support)*. SPAN is a member of the National Coalition of Advocates for Students, the National Parent Network on Disabilities, the National Coalition of Education Activists, the National Black Child Development Institute, Communities Can!, Family Support America, Bright Futures for Families, and the Coalition for Essential Schools. SPAN also serves as the *Center of Expertise on School Reform* for the National Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers.

Information, Training, Technical Assistance and Support

During the past year, SPAN staff, Resource Parents and Support Parents have conducted over 1,000 workshops for more than 42,500 families and professionals. Telephone technical assistance has been provided to over 53,000 families and 7,700 professionals, and there have been over 6,380 in-person contacts for information, technical assistance, and support. Over 1,500 families were directly served by our Parents as Teachers project (85% minority; 93% low-income; 41% limited English proficient); each family received an average of 1.5 home visits a month for a total of 26,000 home visits. SPAN staff have had over 15,000 meeting contacts on policy committees and task forces.
SPAN materials were disseminated to over 20,000 parents and 6,000 professionalsat conferences, and over 27,000 parents received information through SPAN's website and the website of two of our Community Resource Centers. SPAN has disseminated over 205,000 information packets, brochures, manuals, newsletters, and other written materials. 77 medical students and 32 families have participated in the Medical Student Education Project.

Impact of our Work

Telephone and written surveys indicate that SPAN's services and support are having positive impacts on children and families:

Telephone Technical Assistance

- 96% of families felt that the telephone technical assistance they received was helpful;
- 85% felt more confident as a result of the telephone technical assistance received;
- 70% said that the information helped them to secure services for their child;
- 75% felt that they would not have been able to receive assistance without SPAN; and
- Over 90% of families responding to SPAN's mail-in technical assistance survey felt that the information they received was timely, accurate, useful, and presented with a positive attitude.

Training

- 95% of training participants indicated that the training information was useful;
- 90% felt more confident as a result of participating in the workshop;
- 90% said that they were more effective or more involved since the workshop;
- 70% said their child had received more appropriate services because of workshop information (another 15% were still awaiting results); and
- Over 90% of training evaluations were rated "excellent" or "very good;"

Parents As Teachers

Families receiving Parents As Teachers (PAT) services reported that they were:

- More confident in their parenting skills and knowledge;
- More knowledgeable about their child's development and therefore more able to provide opportunities at home to support growth and development;
- Are reading to their children more often;
- Are more involved in their child's schooling; and
- Have greatly benefited from the group meetings and the referrals they receive from their Family Outreach Worker.

Family Outreach Workers report that:

- Children involved in the PAT program are significantly more advanced (after participation) than comparison children in language, problem-solving, and other cognitive abilities and social development;
- Families involved in the PAT program are more confident in their ability to support child development and more able to provide high quality infant and toddler care;
- The adaptability of the PAT program allowed them to provide services for all families;
- The pre- and post-training sessions were a great source of support and provided an excellent forum to voice concerns.

Last year, the State Department of Human Services agreed to train *all* Family Outreach Workers in every Abbott district in the Parents As Teachers model.

SPAN Conferences: The two-day Annual SPAN Conference, a partnership with the New Jersey State Department of Education and the New Jersey Education Association, was very successful, with over 300 participants. The overall conference evaluation score was 4.5 out of a possible 5 points, and most evaluations were extremely positive. This was SPAN's largest conference ever, and reflected a significant increase in attendance by professionals and payment by districts for parents to attend. SPAN's New Jersey Inclusive Child Care conference was also very successful, attracting 200 child care providers. Evaluations were extremely positive.

Public Policy Issues: SPAN is continuing to be very active on a multitude of public policy issues, with successful outcomes. We disseminated informational Action Alerts on:

- Reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* and proposed *discipline revisions to IDEA*;
- Changes to the U.S. Department of Education's *monitoring of states*;
- Implementation of the statewide coordination component of the *children's system of care initiative* for children with mental health needs, and implications of President Bush's *budget proposals for mental health services for children*;
- Increased *special education funding* in New Jersey for children with "extraordinary needs" and proposed *revisions to the State special education code*;
- Implementation of the *universal early childhood mandate* in New Jersey's poorest urban districts.

In addition, SPAN staff continue to serve on numerous committees working to impact public policy, including:

- *New Jersey Association of Partners in Education, Public Education Institute Roundtables, State Department of Education* Abbott *Governance Advisory Committee, State Department of Education Conference Planning Committee on core curriculum content standards, State Conference on equity and cultural diversity planning committee, Regional and national consortia on minority achievement, Newark Whole School Reform Oversight Committee*, and other committees and task forces focusing on making school reform and the Abbott decision work for children.

- *NJ Developmental Disabilities Council Education Subcommittee and the NJ Coalition for Inclusive Education,* working to foster inclusion, improve teacher pre-service and in-service preparation, and increase accountability and enforcement. SPAN staff are active on the Accountability Workgroup of the DDC Education Subcommittee, analyzing monitoring reports and complaint investigations, and being interviewed by print and broadcast reporters and editors.

- *Family Voices-NJ @ SPAN, Exceptional Parent Magazine Advisory Editorial Board, Eastern Paralyzed Veterans' Associations Managed Care Network, SSI Alliance, Medicaid Alliance, Medicaid Workgroup for People with Disabilities, Community Health Law Project "To Your Health" Advisory Committee, Title V Dissemination Committee, American Academy of Pediatrics-NJ Chapter Committee on Children with Disabilities, Mainstreaming Medical Care Conference Advisory Committee, NJ Citizen Action Health Coalition, Promise the Children Network,* and other committees and task forces focusing on ensuring quality health care and health coverage for children (and families). Our Family Voices Co-Coordinator testified on the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant Application.

- *NJ Department of Health Early Intervention Quality Assurance Committee*, an outgrowth of the Stakeholders' and Service Delivery Task Forces, working to improve the early intervention monitoring and accountability system.

- *Children and Family Initiative, Parents' Caucus Board, Implementation Advisory Committee, and Boards of county Family Support Organizations,* working to ensure that the Department of Human Services' Children's System of Care Initiative provides the support and services that families and children with mental health needs require, in the community, culturally competent, and family-directed. SPAN management and staff are represented on the Parents' Caucus Board and the State Implementation Advisory Committee, as well as local Family Support Organization Boards. SPAN staff also participated in legislative visits when in Washington, D.C. at the National Mental Health Association Conference as part of the New Jersey delegation.

- *Map to Inclusive Child Care Team*, working with the Departments of Education and Human Services to ensure the inclusion of children with disabilities in typical early childhood and after-school care settings, especially (though not exclusively) in the Abbott and Early Childhood Program Aid districts. SPAN was represented on the *Governor's Early Childhood Commission, the Department of Education's Early Childhood Curriculum Frameworks Advisory Committee*, and the *Department of Human Services' External Abbott Implementation Advisory Committee.* SPAN continues to participate on the *Early Care and Education Coalition* and the *Early Childhood Standards and Professional Development Task Force at Kean University.*

- *State Rehabilitation Council (chaired by SPAN's Transition to Adult Life Director), Workforce Incentive Board Education Committees, and Transition Consortia,* to increase and enhance options for youth with disabilities.

- *NJ State Department of Education Self-Assessment Steering Committee and Self-Improvement Plan Subcommittee*, developing the state improvement plan and state improvement grant application. SPAN is now funded under the state's Self-Improvement Plan to develop and strengthen local parent support groups; assist school districts to work more effectively with families in policy and program improvement; facilitate family-professional workshops; conduct trainings for families on New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards and Early Literacy; provide families with access to "real-time" responses to their technical assistance questions on our website and host on-line chats; and offer scholarships to families for SPAN's conferences.

Conclusion

During this very productive year, SPAN continued to work to assure that every child in New Jersey has access to a quality public school education and the health and support services they need to succeed. We look forward to the next year to further expand our programs and services and address continuing and new critical education, health and human services issues impacting New Jersey's children and families.

SPAN TASK FORCE/COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION/MEMBERSHIP

National

- Alliance for Parent Centers – Center of Expertise on School Reform
- Families USA
- Family Support America
- Family Voices (Chapter)
- Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (Chapter)
- National Coalition of Advocates for Students (Coalition Board)
- National Coalition of Education Activists
- National Network of Partnership Schools
- National Parent Network on Disabilities
- Parent-to-Parent (Chapter)
- Partners for Family Involvement in Education
- US Department of Education Focused Monitoring Work Group

Statewide

- American Academy of Pediatrics-Committee on Children with Disabilities
- Black Issues Convention
- Bullying/Harassment Work Group (NJ Taskforce on Child Abuse & Neglect, Violence Institute of NJ, Anti-Defamation League, Rutgers Law Center)
- Center for the Prevention of Violence – Youth Consultation Service
- Coalition for Early Care and Education
- NJ Alliance for Crime Victims with Developmental Disabilities
- NJ Alternate Proficiency Assessment Advisory Committee
- NJ Association of Partners in Education (Board of Directors)
- NJ Citizen Action Health Care Coalition
- NJ Coalition for Inclusive Education (At-Large Member, Board)
- NJ Department of Education Special Education Self-Assessment Steering Committee
- NJ Department of Education State Improvement Plan Management Team
- NJ Department of Education Abbott Early Childhood Task Force
- NJ Department of Education Abbott School Governance Task Force
- NJ Department of Education Measuring Student Achievement Task Force
- NJ Department of Education 21st Century Community Learning Centers Advisory Committee
- NJ Department of Health Early Intervention Monitoring Group
- NJ Department of Health Early Intervention Self-Assessment Steering Committee
- NJ Department of Health Early Intervention Stakeholders' Task Force
- NJ Department of Human Services Children's System of Care Implementation Advisory Committee
- NJ Department of Human Services Children's System of Care Ad Hoc Education Committee

- ☐ NJ Department of Human Services Map to Inclusive Child Care Team
- ☐ NJ Developmental Disabilities Council Education Subcommittee
- ☐ NJ Developmental Disabilities Council Enforcement & Accountability Workgroup
- ☐ NJ Statewide Systemic Initiatives Urban Summit
- ☐ NJ Parents' Caucus (Board of Directors)
- ☐ NJ Promise the Children Network (Steering Committee)
- ☐ NJ Rehabilitation Committee (Chair)
- ☐ NJ Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)
- ☐ NJ Special Education Practitioners
- ☐ NJ SSI Coalition
- ☐ NJ State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC)
- ☐ Pathways to a Better Trained Workforce
- ☐ Project Leadership
- ☐ Teacher Quality Enhancement Consortium
- ☐ University Center of Excellence (Boggs Center) Consumer Advisory Council
- ☐ Violence Institute of New Jersey

SPAN Collaborating Agencies

Disability & Special Health Care Issues

American Academy of Pediatrics-Children w/ Disabilities Comm.
Arc of New Jersey
Association for Children of New Jersey
Association for Special Children and Families
Becoming Education and Motivated About Education (BEAM)
Boggs Center-University-Affiliated Program of New Jersey
Brain Injury Association
Catholic Family & Community Services
CHADD (Attention Deficit Disorder)
Coalition for Special Education Funding Reform
Commission for the Blind
Community Health Law Project
Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities
Council for Exceptional Children
Developmental Disabilities Council Education Committee
Down Syndrome Support Group
Education Law Center
Epilepsy Foundation
Families Finding Hope
Family Link Early Intervention Collaborative
Family Resource Associates
Family Support Center
Family Support Coalition
Family Support Organization of Burlington County
Family Support Organization of Monmouth County
Family Support Organization of Union County
Family Support Planning Councils
Family Voices
Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
Helpful Hands Early Intervention Collaborative
Learning Disabilities Association
Learning Resource Centers
Map to Inclusive Child Care Team
Mainstreaming Medical Care
Mid-Jersey CARES for Special Children Early Intervention Collab.
National Parent Network on Disabilities
NEC*TAS
Newark Coalition for Lead-Free Children
NJ Alliance for the Mentally Ill
NJ Coalition for Advancement of Rehabilitation Technology
NJ Coalition for Inclusive Education
NJ Citizen Action Health Care Coalition
NJ Mental Health Association
NJ Parents Caucus for Children with Special Emotional Needs
NJ Protection and Advocacy
NJ Special Olympics
Self-Help Clearinghouse
Southern Regional Early Intervention Collaborative
Spina Bifida Association
Technology Assistance Resources Program (TARP)
Tourette Syndrome Association
United Cerebral Palsy Associations of New Jersey

School Reform/Urban Education

Advocacy Institute
ASPIRA- NJ & National
Association for Children of New Jersey
Black Education Summit Planning Comm.
Black Issues Convention
Catholic Charities
Catholic Family & Community Services
Center for Law & Education
Children's Defense Fund
Citizens for Better Schools
Coalition for Essential Schools
Comm. Of Advocates for Newark Children
Communities Can!
Concerned African-American Parents
Early Care & Education Coalition
Education, Information & Resources Center
Education Law Center
Education Trust
Family Support America
Head Start Association
Hispanic Development Corporation
Hispanic Executive Directors
Improving Minority Achievement Collab.
La Raza
Leadership for a Changing World
National Black Child Development Institute
National Coali. Of Advocates for Students
National Coalition of Education Activists
NAACP
Nat'l. Asso. For Education of Yg. Children
Newark Community Development Network
NJ Association of Partners in Education
NJ Education Association
NJ Empowerment Summit Diversity Comm.
NJ Institute for Social Justice
NJ Professional Standards for Child Care
Next Generation of Leadership
Parents As Teachers
Paterson Education Fund
Prevent Child Abuse-America & NJ
Programs for Parents
Project Grad
Project Leadership (Newark & United Way)
Promise the Children Network
Public Education Institute
Public Education Network
Right Question Project
Social-Emotional Learning Collaborative
Teach for America
Unified Child Care Agencies (18)
Unified Vailsburg Services Organization
Urban League